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DIDEROT'S THOUGHTS

ON

ART AND STYLE

WITH SOME OF HIS SHORTER ESSAYS

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED

BY BEATRIX L. *Lucie Catherine Egerton* TOLLEMACHE

(HON. MRS. LIONEL *Arthur* TOLLEMACHE)

"Deus dedit, et dabit porro."

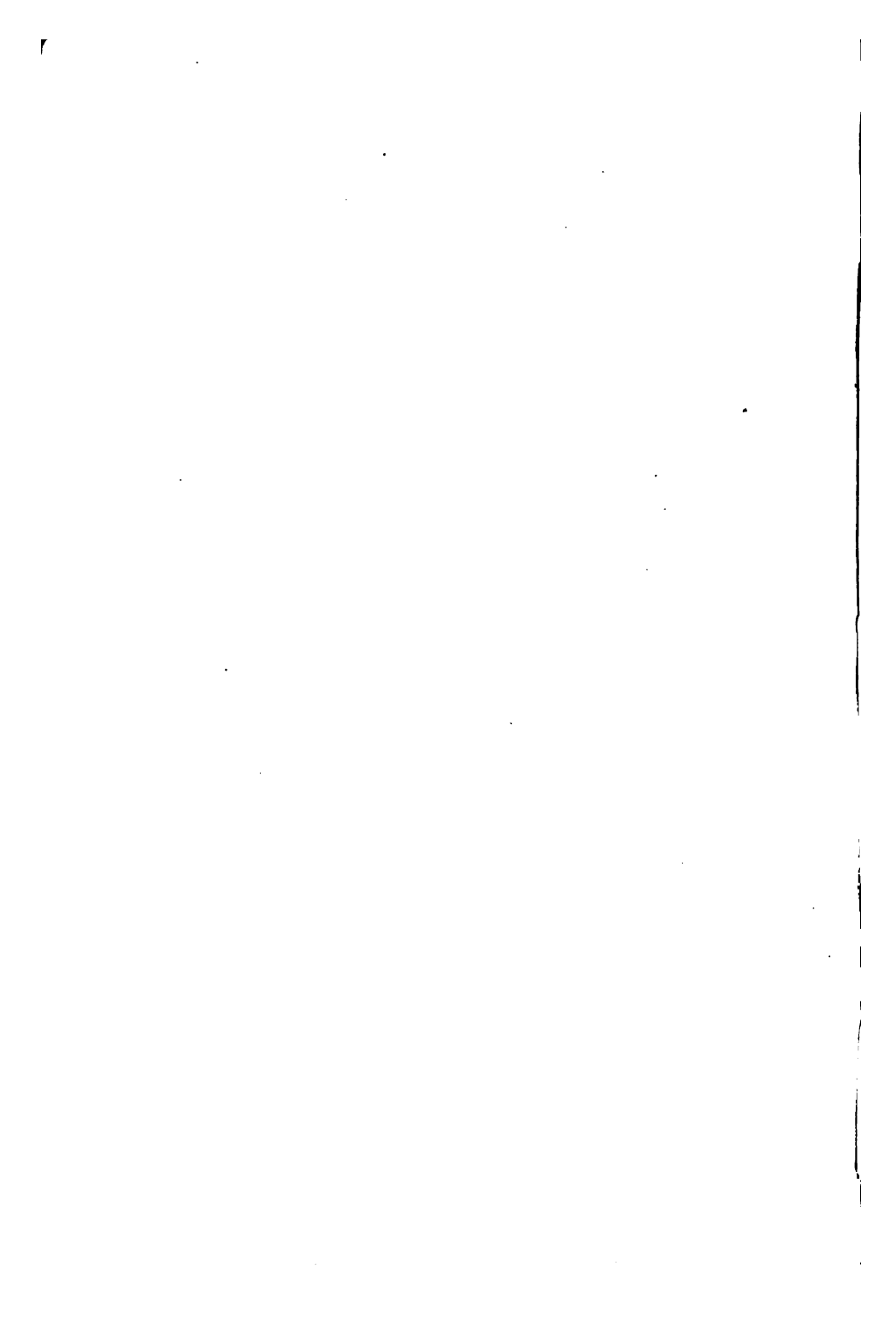
"All the prizes, all the elegancies, too, of life, without exception, poems, pictures, and the chiselling fine-wrought statues, all these things practice, together with the acquired knowledge of the untiring mind, taught men by slow degrees as they advanced on the way step by step. Thus time by degrees brings each several thing forth before men's eyes, and reason raises them up into the borders of light."—*Tr.* H. MUNRO.

RIVINGTONS

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LONDON

1904



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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE progress of literature may be compared, I think, to the garden described by Bacon in his well-known essay, which is, he suggests, to be divided into three parts; first, the green lawn, then the main garden, where he places all kinds of artificial ornaments and regular alleys, and, thirdly, the heath, where natural wildness is to be encouraged or simulated. Now the green lawn, it appears to me, may be likened in its stately simplicity to the classical school, the main garden to the highly artificial literature of the early part of the eighteenth century; while Rousseau, Diderot, and the romantic school are the heath, and simulate the natural wildness. But with all his desire to return to Nature as the true teacher, Diderot does not allow himself to be misled by the idea that we need only copy Nature, and he has the true artist's instinct for forming a whole, of which the parts are subordinate to each other. In his "Salons" he has many passages to



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this effect ; yet the preacher does not always practise, and instinct is sometimes overpowered by the vivacity of his fancy.

It is curious to contrast the different treatment which Diderot has received from his various critics. Ste. Beuve takes the point of view of a literary critic, and values his "Salons" highly, but passes lightly over his position as a philosopher, as a thinker and a precursor of the French Revolution. Scherer, on the other hand, is the stern moralist who judges him by the standard of to-day, instead of realizing the fact that Mr. Lecky has so well brought before us, that the moral standard changes and gradually rises from generation to generation, so that we stand on a higher moral platform than our ancestors in the eighteenth century ; just as in our own country it is the labouring man who gets drunk and thinks lightly of it, while in the last century it was the squires who drank, yet deemed themselves worthy folk according to the standard around them. Carlyle is even more severe in his judgment than Scherer, and certainly hits harder and with an intolerance which must have come down from his Puritan ancestors.

Taine, in alluding to Diderot, says : " We find a generation of sound intellects followed by one wanting in mental equilibrium." He goes on to compare him with Voltaire, and finds more life in Diderot's characters

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than in Voltaire's. "In the latter the strings that pull the puppets are visible ; in the former they are cut and the figures move of their own accord." Diderot soars on the wings of inspiration, but, alas ! his wings do not prevent his often falling into the mud. He is one of the most unequal of writers, now expressing in beautiful language his admiration and respect for virtue, now telling stories which the taste of the present day would not suffer to be printed. The critic, who has done so much to introduce a fruitful criticism, was at times incapable of judging his own work ; he was run away by his eager imagination. Goethe, who warned young men not to allow themselves to drift, might have added a warning against the opposite danger of allowing their talents to run unbridled to riot ; as the late Master of Balliol (Scott) once said to a pupil, "There are some who require the spur, but others require the rein." Diderot required the rein.

Some extracts from Ste. Beuve's essay on Diderot may form a fitting introduction of this classic writer to English readers, and show them his position in French literature—that literature whose prose stands unrivalled in clearness and its fitness to be the medium for the critic's judgments. Ste. Beuve calls Diderot "the most German of Frenchmen," and we find Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller translating him as if they felt a certain affinity with him, and he undoubtedly suggested to

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Lessing some of his writings on the drama and his famous "Laocoon." There is a frankness and bonhomie about Diderot, and a certain disregard of conventional rules, which mark him out as introducing a new style.

He was one of those who, with Rousseau, went back to nature and revolted against the classical school which was in favour at that time. He studied not merely the surface of human nature, but had the Teutonic mining instinct, and sought to penetrate into motives and first principles and questions of morals. He has even prophetic gleams of Darwinism in his remarks on species and the morality of men and beasts.

Ste. Beuve calls him also "the first great writer of democratic society," for he protests against luxury; and in his charming essay, "A Lament for my Old Dressing-Gown," he shows a simplicity of taste which reminds one of the description of the room where Goethe wrote, and which contained a few simple pieces of furniture, and none of those distracting objects which may divert the mind from beholding its own creations.

Diderot has accused himself of "unbridled curiosity."* It was a curiosity of that kind of which

* Did Montaigne coin the word *incuriosité* in this passage: "Oh ! que c'est un doux et mol chevet, et sain, que l'ignorance et l'incuriosité à reposer une tête bien faite ?" Diderot comments on it thus: "One must have a head as well made as Montaigne's to be able to find ignorance and *incuriosity* to be two soft pillows." May not the over-active brain long at times for two such pillows as conducive to sleep?

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Cherbuliez says "Les esprits supérieurs sont toujours curieux;" yet, being unbridled, it has prevented his concentrating his faculties on one great work. Are we to blame him for this? Would it not be wiser to acknowledge that different natures have different gifts, and that a hunter does not do the work of a steam engine? ~~X~~ In his revolt against the classical school, in his sympathy for the new democratic ideas which were stirring, Diderot was not likely to give limitations their true worth; they are, as it were, the steel rails which facilitate traction, but make the motion more mechanical and monotonous. The "fougue de Diderot," as Legouvé expresses it, recalls the high-mettled charger eager for the battle, and Diderot dashes down his thoughts, is carried away by his feelings, and starts aside in many a suggestive and amusing digression; and if his value as a critic is somewhat marred by this impetuosity, it yet gives life and charm to his style, and will make many a reader take down his volumes while calmer critics lie unconsulted on their shelves.

This selection from Diderot here presented deals chiefly with questions of art, style, and morals.* This small volume aims at introducing him to a wider circle

* Mr. Morley, in his interesting life of Diderot, has given a translation of "Le Neveu de Rameau," a work which would have been out of place in this selection, and Mr. Walter Pollock has translated "Le Paradoxe d'un Comédien," which is, therefore, omitted here.

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of English readers than he has hitherto reached, and we trust these extracts may be found stimulating to thought. It is curious to contrast Diderot's admiration of Richardson's novels * with the remarks made by Lady Mary Wortley Montague. She could not help weeping over "Clarissa Harlowe," and writes: "The first volume softened me by a near resemblance of my maiden days, but on the whole 'tis most miserable stuff." And again, "I heartily dispise him (Richardson) and eagerly read him." She is shocked at his want of knowledge of society—"He has no idea of the manners of high life." The minor faults of the author prevented her admiring his insight into human nature and appreciating the truth of his delineations of character.

Diderot, on the other hand, was not jarred by the defects which annoyed the woman of fashion, and though his praise of Richardson strikes us as excessive, we should remember Goethe's great admiration for Fielding's novels and for "The Vicar of Wakefield," which may help us to understand the qualities in the English authors which pleased the great writers of foreign nations, who were rebelling against the French

* "I interrupt myself for a moment to express, at this later time of life, the deep admiration I still feel for Richardson. The follies of modern novel writing render it impossible for young people to understand the perfection of the human nature in his conception and delicacy of finish in his dialogue, rendering all his greater scenes unsurpassable in their manner of art."—RUSKIN.

classical school. Was it not a certain freshness of
 ② delineation of human nature as contrasted with the
 wooden puppets of less original writers, and with the
 artificial sentiments of the later romances? If we
 wish to trace Diderot's position in the world of thought
 we must turn to German writers, for in Germany he
 has long been valued. An interesting and careful
 analysis of his writings and his relations with the
 scientific and literary men of his day is given in
 "Diderot's Leben und Werke," by K. Rosenkrantz
 (pub. Leipzig 1866). It was as a mathematician that
 Diderot first claimed attention. When he was later
 branded as an Atheist it was apparently owing to the
 jealousy and ill-will of La Harpe, who declared that
 the articles in the "Encyclopædia" showed Diderot to
 be a man who despised the Church. The multitude
 believed this without reading the articles, and as
 infidelity was considered a crime by a large class of
 ignorant courtiers, the fame of Diderot was obscured
 for a time. He is indeed a curious instance of a man
 who was very popular among a small circle of friends,
 but whose merits were, after his death, overshadowed
 by his illustrious contemporaries, Grimm, Buffon,
 d'Alembert, and others. One reason may be that many
 of his MSS. were not published till long after his death,
 and his charming letters to Mlle. Volland were not
 brought to light till 1830.

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Yet the more we inquire into the history of the compilation of the "Encyclopædia" the more we are struck by Diderot's untiring energy and perseverance, and his great power of mastering the technical details of a great variety of manufactures so as to be able to present them clearly to his readers; his vigorous mind was ready to take up any subject when some careless contributor failed to produce the article required for the "Encyclopædia."

Modern science has made some of Diderot's writings antiquated, but the student who cares to consult the French edition of his works in twenty volumes may find an historical interest in tracing the germs of some of our modern theories.

His ideas on the danger of over civilization may have been quickened by the recollection of his prison days at Vincennes, where he was thrown, not so much on account of the unorthodox nature of his writings, as because he ventured to complain of having been forestalled by a scientific court lady in the examination of a blind man after an operation for cataract. In contrast with his treatment in civilized France, the conduct of the Empress Catherine in her semi-barbarous Empire was striking. In St. Petersburg his talents were fully recognized, and the Empress had the merit of being a good listener and of overlooking the want of courtly manners in her guest. Diderot required above

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all an intelligent audience; he had tried in his youth being tutor to the children of a rich financier, and devoted himself to them for a time, but at last could endure the strain no longer; he preferred poverty and independence and leisure for study. When his father desired him to choose one of three professions, and sent his friend M. Clement to tell him, his son Denis refused, and when asked what he wished to become, answered, "Nothing, nothing at all; I love learning. I am quite contented and happy; I wish for nothing else."

In the region of the drama Diderot was more of a Moses than a Joshua; he broke away from the old classical ~~tradition and endeavoured to be natural~~, to bring the stage in relation with daily life, to democratize it if we may so say, and in doing this, though he failed to gain the public ear, he opened a new country to the German writers, who were ready and eager to profit by his teaching and example. "Le Fils Naturel," with its setting of dialogue and criticism, is interesting, and might again take its place on the stage. It was translated into English in the last century. Diderot, as a story-teller, has the fatal vice of coarseness, nor had he the final gift of the artist, the power of choice, the instinctive or highly trained taste which knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. Unlike most Frenchmen, he took the trouble of learning English, ✓

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and translated Lord Shaftesbury's "Essay on Virtue," afterwards published in the "Characteristics."

His account of his method of translation of this work shows that he acted on the principle that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." "Je l'ai lu et relu; je me suis rempli de son esprit; et j'ai, pour ainsi dire, fermé son livre lorsque j'ai pris la plume." ("I read it over and over again till I had steeped myself in its meaning; and then I shut up the book, so to say, and took up my pen.")

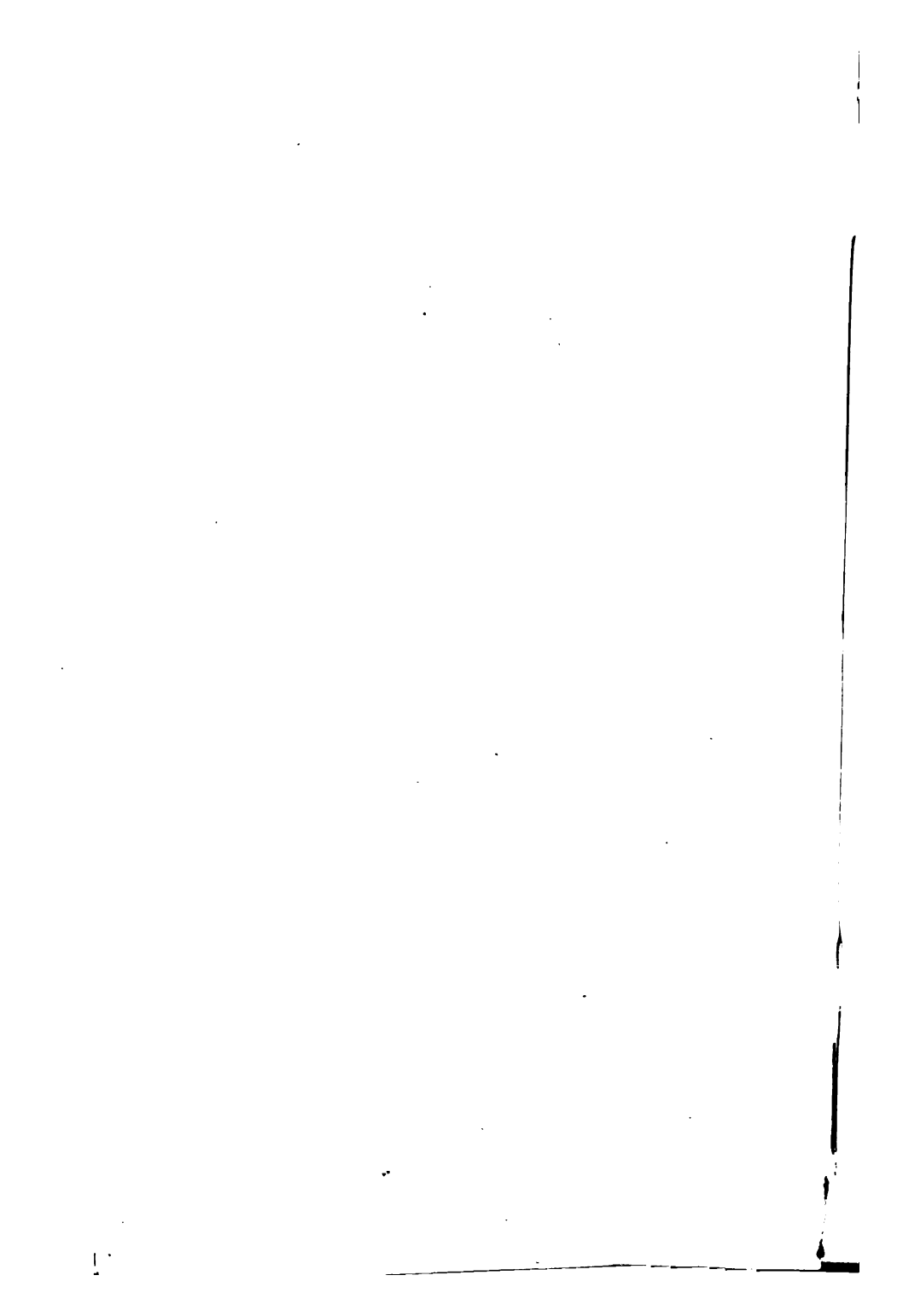
One of his suggestive questions is: "How far the artist has a separate morality of his own?" Some of the greatest artists seem to approach the indifference of nature and represent good and evil warring without letting us know on which side their sympathy is, and without, as it were, caring which prevailed, though keenly interested in the contest; they are *unmoral*, if not immoral.

Again, he asks, have beasts a different morality to ours? We certainly hold ourselves privileged to do things to beasts which we should consider immoral as done to man. Even anti-vivisectionists are not, I believe all vegetarians; and the philanthropist, Sir John Lubbock, did not think it immoral to make ants drunk in order to see whether their sober brethren would treat them in the same manner as they treated alien ants who were likewise made drunk.

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It was with regret that we omit in this volume showing Diderot on his more intimate side as a letter writer; there is a great charm in his descriptions of country life, and the pleasant society that met in Baron d'Holbach's chateau, but his letters to Mlle. Volland would take us too far away from the special subjects of this volume, art and style, and oblige us to enter upon details of Diderot's domestic life and its relation to his intellectual life and friendships. Though much of Diderot's work in the "Encyclopædia" may have been superseded, so many of his pages are what De Quincey calls "the literature of power," that they will, I believe, be read eagerly by those who can appreciate the charm of intercourse with an original mind. My part as translator has been to build the bridge of communication between the English reader and French writer.

BEATRIX L. TOLLEMACHE.



SAINTE BEUVE ON DIDEROT

DIDEROT was born at Langres, in Champagne, in 1713 ; his father was a master cutler in a good position and esteemed by his fellow-citizens ; his brother became a canon of the cathedral at Langres, and was a man of saintly though rather eccentric character. His only sister was lively, energetic, and warm-hearted. She never married, in order to devote herself to the care of her father. She resembled her brother Denis in many ways, but remained the wild, unpruned branch while he was the cultivated graft, softened and improved by civilizing influences. Yet at first Diderot was considered the black sheep of the family, and it was not till long after that his great talents brought him fame. He studied at the Jesuits' College in his native town, and his masters would gladly have kept him there, but his father sent him to pursue his further studies at the College d'Harcourt in Paris. When he left College he remained in Paris trying various employments but

settling down to none. He spent much time in studying and devouring books of all kinds, sometimes giving lessons in mathematics, and learning one day what he had to teach the next. His genius, for we must certainly give that name to his vigorous mental powers and width of grasp, was at all times discursive, but it was his nature, and perhaps he could not have done more if he had tried to concentrate it, instead of scattering it broadcast on every soil as he sauntered onwards. In summer he might be seen wandering about the Luxembourg Gardens in a long grey plush coat with a torn sleeve, and black woollen stockings darned here and there with white cotton.

His one great work, on which he has stamped his name, was the "Encyclopædia." When the publishers who had planned the book entrusted it to the hands of Diderot, they soon found that they had hold of the right man to carry out their idea, and to give it life and being. Diderot took it up warmly, and presented the plan in such a favourable light that he persuaded Chancellor Daguesseau * to give it his protection and

* Daguesseau was born at Limoges in 1668. Ste. Beuve says of him that he received an excellent education from his father, and went on learning all his life, so that a story is told of a mother asking Fontenelle to recommend her a tutor for her son; the tutor must be a scholar and antiquary, a man of science, a metaphysician; in fact, he must know everything. "Madam," said Fontenelle, "the more I consider what you require, the more it seems to me that the Chancellor Daguesseau is alone fit to be your son's tutor."

patronage. For nearly twenty-five years (1748-1772) Diderot, associated first with d'Alembert, and later alone, was the pillar and Atlas (if we may say so) of this great enterprise; he bore the burden bravely with a serene and smiling countenance, though his shoulders stooped under the weight. Towards the end of his life he said with a sigh, "I know, indeed, a good many things, but almost every one knows his own subject better than I do. This want of thorough knowledge is the result of unbridled curiosity and small means which have prevented my devoting myself to any particular branch of knowledge. All my life I have been obliged to follow occupations for which I was not suited, and to give up those to which my own tastes drew me." Whether he was mistaken in saying this I cannot tell, but I am tempted to think that this constant variety of pursuits was what he really liked best. He has remarked that in his own district round Langres the changes of weather are so rapid that one may pass from heat to cold, from calm to storm, from fine to wet, in the twenty-four hours, and this variability of climate may probably affect the temperament of the inhabitants; "they are thus accustomed from childhood," he says, "to be prepared for constant changes. The head of a Langrois turns on his shoulders like the weathercock on a steeple; it never stays in one place. If it veers round to the point it has just left it will not

remain there. They are very rapid in action, determination, plans, whims and ideas, yet are slow in speech. I belong to my native district, but a residence in the capital and diligent study have in part corrected my temperament; I am steadfast in my tastes." Yes, steadfast in his tastes, but extremely impressionable, and he says of himself when criticizing his portrait by Michel Van-Loo, "I protest to you, my children, that this is not me. I had a hundred different expressions in the course of the day, sad, dreamy, tender, violent, passionate, enthusiastic, but never such as I am portrayed there." He adds, and it is well that we should be able to picture him to ourselves: "I had a large forehead, very bright eyes, the features rather large, a head like that of an ancient orator, a good nature which verged on the stupidity of a rustic of olden days." Let us now see Diderot as his contemporaries all agree in describing him, not as his artist friends Van-Loo and Greuze painted him, for they missed the likeness. "His broad forehead, softly rounded," says Meister, "bore the stamp of a great, luminous and fertile genius. His profile was bold and fine in outline, the usual expression of his eyes was gentle and intelligent, but when he got excited they sparkled with fire. His mouth was expressive of a curious mingling of good humour, grace, and acuteness." Here we see a man who was most himself when he was roused and

excited, which often occurred. He who has only known Diderot through his writings, say all his contemporaries had not really known him.*

But Diderot, open-hearted and affable as he was to every one, shunned fashionable society; he could not get accustomed to the Salons of Mde. Geoffrin, Mde. Du Deffand, Mde. Necker, and other ladies in society. He sometimes appeared at their parties, but went away as soon as possible. Mde. d'Epinaÿ, with the aid of Grimm, was partly successful in taming her shy guest, and she deserved to be so, for she appreciated him warmly.

"Four lines by this man," she said, "make more impression on me than a whole book by our so-called clever writers."

The Empress of Russia, the great Catherine, was equally successful in taming the philosopher by means of her strength of character and kindliness; as is well known, he went to St. Petersburg, and, it is said, talked freely to her, as if she were a fellow-student.

If the "Encyclopædia" is Diderot's greatest work,

* The President de Brosses writes from Paris in 1754, and describes his making acquaintance with Diderot through Buffon. "I want to know that man," he said, "who is so terribly fond of metaphysics," and after meeting him he adds, "He's a nice fellow, very amiable and gentle, and a great philosopher; he argues forcibly, but is always digressing. During the time that he was in my room yesterday, from nine till one, he made 25 digressions. Oh, how much clearer Buffon is than all such folk."

we of to-day remember him chiefly as the creator of a new style of criticism, full of feeling, vivacity, and eloquence. Before Diderot we had in France the exact, acute, and penetrating critic Bayle, the eloquent and refined Fénélon, the sincere and practical Rollin. But criticism then was not vivifying, fruitful and discriminating, it had as yet (if I may so express it) no soul. It was Diderot who first breathed into it a soul. He was naturally inclined to pass lightly over faults, and to be enthusiastic over good qualities. "I am more affected," he said, "by the charms of virtue than by the ugliness of vice; I turn gently away from the wicked, and fly to meet the good."

It was said of him that he was singularly fortunate in two points, "that he had never met a bad man or a worthless book;" for if the book was stupid he read his own ideas into it, and unconsciously imputed his own thoughts to the author. Like the alchemist he found gold in the crucible because he had put it there. This plan is not always convenient and might be abused, but we must acknowledge that it is to Diderot we owe the introduction of a new style of criticism, which consists rather in pointing out *beauties* than in searching for *faults*; and Chateaubriand, in his eloquent literary criticisms in "Le Génie du Christianisme," has only followed in the path first trod by Diderot. The Abbé Arnaud said to him one day, "Your talent is

just the contrary to that of the dramatist; he must transform himself into his characters, but you transform all the characters into yourself." It is true that Diderot was no dramatist, and had not the potent imagination which creates and presents living characters outside the author's personality. But he had on the other hand a great gift of semi-metamorphosis, which is the height of the critical faculty, and which consists in putting one's self in the author's place, and looking at the subject from his point of view, and reading everything in the spirit in which it was written. Diderot had this wonderful faculty for throwing himself into an author's mind, and for becoming more enthusiastic on the subject than the author himself. And not only his intellect, but his feelings became excited, and it was then that he became the Homer of modern journalists, intelligent, eloquent, full of ardour, never absorbed in his own ideas, but ever ready to harbour and welcome those of others, giving to every one, readers, authors, or artists, not a lecture, but a literary feast.

It is thus that he shows himself in his admirable "Salons de Peinture." Grimm, who himself furnished several northern royalties with the last news in literature and the fine arts, begged his friend Diderot to give him a sketch of the "Salon" in 1761. Diderot, who had written on many subjects, had not hitherto

specially treated the fine arts, but at his friend's request he began for the first time to examine carefully the pictures which he had formerly only glanced at; and from the results of his observations and reflections sprang those charming pages of chat about pictures, which have created in France the new criticism of the fine arts.

I know the objection which is often made to these criticisms, that they are *beside* the subject, that they treat it from the literary and dramatic point of view so dear to Frenchmen. Mde. Necker wrote to Diderot, "I enjoy extremely reading your 'Salon;' I only care for painting in poetry, and you have succeeded in translating all the works of our modern painters, even the most commonplace, into the language of poetry."

How far Diderot is *literary* in his mode of judging pictures may be remarked in the following incident. An artist had represented Telemachus with Calypso; he is seated at a feast, reciting his adventures, while Calypso offers him a peach. Diderot thinks that it was ridiculous to offer a peach at that moment, and that Telemachus had more sense than the painter or Calypso, for he takes no notice of the peach offered him, but goes on reciting his adventures. But if the peach were gracefully offered, if the light fell on it in some striking way, and if the nymph looked charming, in a word, if Titian or Veronese had painted the picture,

the offering of a peach might have been a masterpiece, in spite of what the critic called the *folly* of it. For in a picture the narration, which you cannot hear, counts for very little, and the offered peach does not seem an interruption; it is our eyes, not our ears, which are appealed to in the painting.

Yet Diderot in a great many cases makes true and striking remarks, not so much as a literary critic as from a painter's point of view. For example, he says to M. Vien who had painted Psyche with a lamp in her hand coming to surprise Cupid asleep, "Oh! how dull our painters are, and how little they study nature. The head of Psyche ought to have been bending over Cupid, while the rest of her body was drawn back as when we advance to a spot where we fear to enter and from which we are ready to fly; one foot should be on the ground and the other lightly touching it. And should she have let the light fall on Cupid's eyes? Ought she not to have held it on one side and shaded it with her hand? Besides it would have produced a much more original effect of light in the picture. These painters don't seem to know that the eyelids are partly transparent. Have they never seen a mother visit her sleeping child at night and shade the lamp with her hand lest she should wake her sleeping infant?"

But where Diderot especially deserves to be listened

to, even by painters, is where he insists on the importance of unity in a composition, on the general harmony of effect, and on the tendency of motions towards one result. He seems to understand this far-reaching unity by instinct, he is perpetually referring to it; he requires harmony of tints and expression, and a natural linking together of accessory details. In speaking of a picture by Deshays of a dying St. Benedict who is receiving the viaticum, he points out that if the artist had chosen his scene when the saint was rather nearer his last moments, "with his arms slightly extended, the head thrown back, the pallor of death on his lips, and a smile of ecstasy on his face," this single fact of change of expression in the principal figure would have obliged him to alter each one of the countenances standing round, and to make them express more pity and tender feeling. He adds, "Here is a picture where it is easy to point out to young students that in changing one object one must change all the others, or the truthfulness of the scene disappears. One might take this painting as the text of a lecture on the *importance of unity*." Diderot here shows himself a great critic; and again he says in that species of wide criticism which no artist can escape on the plea of his technical knowledge, "In taking up the brush methinks the painter should have some idea in his mind, forcible, or ingenious, or refined; he must aim at giving some

DIDEROT'S THOUGHTS ON ART AND STYLE

ON COMPOSITION

(From the "Encyclopædia")

X A PICTURE to be well composed should be a whole regarded from a single point of view; each part should contribute its share to the principal effect, and be related to the parts as the members of a living body are related to each other so as to form a whole; and we may say of a picture, where a great number of figures are dashed on to the canvas without thought or consideration of their relation to each other, that it is no more a true composition than scattered studies of legs, eyes, and noses on one sheet of paper would deserve the name of a portrait, or even of a human figure.

Hence it follows that the painter is subject to the same laws as the poet in his composition, and that the three unities of action, place, and time must be

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observed as strictly in historical painting as in dramatic poetry. But as the laws of composition are less fixed in paintings which are not historical we shall confine ourselves chiefly to treating of the latter, yet giving incidentally in the course of this article the laws which are to be observed in representing all subjects, whether historical, natural, or poetical.

Of Unity of Time in Painting.—This law is much more stringent for the painter than for the poet. The latter is granted twenty-four hours, that is to say, that he is allowed to put the events which might naturally happen in twenty-four hours into the space of three hours, which is the usual duration of a piece, and he will not be held to have transgressed the laws of probability. But the painter has only one moment which can scarcely be broken into parts, and all the action of his composition must have regard to this moment: if part of the composition refers to the moment before, or the moment after, he has transgressed the law of unity. When Calchas holds aloft the knife to plunge it into the breast of Iphigenia, the deepest horror, pity, and grief must appear on the countenance of the bystanders. Clytemnestra, furious, will rush to the altar and endeavour, in spite of the soldiers who keep her back, to seize the hand of Calchas, and to place herself so as to shield her daughter; Agamemnon will have his head covered with his cloak, and so on.

In every action it is possible to distinguish a number of different moments to represent, and he would be an unskilful artist who did not choose the most interesting; it will be, according to the subject, the most pathetic, or the most stirring, or the most comic moment, unless the special rules of painting ordain otherwise. But unless he chooses it he will have to make up for the loss of interest by his skilful choice of colours and arrangement of light and shade. The painter sometimes sacrifices the moment of interest to what is too often honoured by the name of *delicate taste*, which will not allow Philoctetes to utter inarticulate cries on the stage, nor to writhe in agony before his cavern, and which banishes many interesting subjects from painting.

Each moment chosen by the painter has its advantages and disadvantages for him; but, once chosen, all the rest must follow. Prodicus tells the story that Hercules in his youth, after killing the Erymanthian boar, was met in a lonely spot in the forest by the goddess of Glory and the goddess of Pleasure, who each wished to win him. How many different moments in this moral fable might be chosen by a painter; he might paint from it a whole gallery of pictures. There is the moment when the hero is in the presence of the goddesses; the moment when the voice of Pleasure whispers in his ear; then that when Honour appeals

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to his feelings; the moment when he is oscillating between the two, honour and pleasure; the moment when honour begins to preponderate; the moment when he finally decides in her favour.

At the sight of the goddesses he ought to be filled with admiration and astonishment; the voice of Pleasure awakens his softer emotions; that of Honour stirs his nobler feelings; while he is weighing their merits he is dreamy, thoughtful, hesitating; as the mental conflict increases and the moment of sacrifice approaches he is stirred by regret, he is agitated, he is full of uneasiness, and torments lay hold of him; *et premitur ratione animus, vincique laborat.*

The painter who should be so wanting in taste as to choose the moment when Hercules has finally decided in favour of Glory and Honour would lose all the sublimity of this fable, and would be obliged to give a look of sadness to the goddess of Pleasure, who has lost her suit, which would be quite inconsistent with her character. In choosing one moment the painter gives up all the advantages of any other. When Calchas has plunged the sacred knife into the breast of Iphigenia her mother must swoon away; her efforts to avert the blow would belong to a moment that is past; to go back to that moment for a second is to transgress as deeply as to forestall a thousand years hence. Yet there are cases when it is allowable to give not only

the actual moment, but also some suggestions of a past time, as when tears of grief are trickling down a face where joy begins to appear. A skilful artist knows how to seize the moment when the feelings are changing from one state to another, and he produces a masterpiece. Such is "Marie de Medicis" in the Luxembourg gallery; Rubens has painted her so as to give the expression of joy at the birth of a son and yet to show traces of the pains of delivery. We may say of these two states of emotion that the one is present and the other is not absent.

As we are rarely anchored in one definite state of feeling, but are tossed about by varying and contrary currents of emotion, it is not sufficient to be able to represent a simple passion; an artist who can do no more than that will lose many a delicate shade of feeling; his brush will never produce such figures as attract us to look at them again and again, while we seem to find new meanings in them as we study them the more; the passions he paints are too marked to give us this pleasure; they will be more striking at first sight, but will suggest less.

On Unity of Action.—This unity is nearly related to that of time. To grasp two moments is to paint one subject from two different points of view; a fault which is less obvious, but which is really more clumsy than to have two subjects. Two actions, linked together,

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or even separate, may take place at the same moment in the same place; but two different moments imply a contradiction in one subject unless we choose to consider it a case of two different subjects given on the same canvas. Those poets who do not feel that they have sufficient genius to compose five interesting acts out of a simple subject are fond of fusing several subjects into one, and multiplying episodes, and the less imagination they have the more they cram their piece with actions.

Painters sometimes fall into the same error. No one denies that the principal action will entail secondary ones, but they must be the necessary results of the principal action; we must be able to trace their connection easily and to feel that they are subordinate, and that the spectator is not perplexed by them. You may vary the "Massacre of the Innocents" in any way you please, but wherever I look I must be able to recognize the massacre; the minor episodes may lead me towards the subject or draw me away from it, but the latter result is always a fault. The law of unity of action is even more stringent for the painter than for the poet. A good picture can only give one subject or even one scene for a drama; but one drama may furnish subjects for a hundred different pictures.

On Unity of Place.—This unity is more binding in one way and less in another for the painter than for the poet. The scene is more extensive in painting, but it

is only one scene ; while the poet, who is not restricted to one moment as the painter is, may lead his hearers from one room to another, the painter, on the contrary, wherever he chooses his scene, whether it be chamber, hall, portico, or out-of-doors, must there abide. He may, it is true, by means of perspective, enlarge his scene as much as he likes, but he cannot change or wander.

On the Subordination of the Figures.—It is plain that the figures must attract our attention in proportion to the interest they should excite in the spectator ; it is also plain that they must each occupy the spot suited to their part in the action, and that each must manifest the proper degree of passion, and if one speaks the others must listen, for to have many persons speaking at the same time has as bad an effect in a picture as in society, and everything being equally perfect in nature, in a perfect picture all the parts should be equally perfectly painted, though not attracting our attention more than their subordinate parts would justify. For, if you had witnessed the sacrifice of Abraham, the bush and the ram would have been as real to you as the sacrificer and his son ; let them, therefore, be as real on your canvas, and do not be afraid that these lesser parts will make us neglect to fix our attention on the more important parts. In nature they have not that effect. Why, then, should they produce it when given on your canvas ?

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On Decorations, Draperies, and Accessory Details.—

We cannot too much insist on moderation and suitable choice in decorations. There is in painting as in poetry a fatal exuberance; if you have to paint a manger, why prop it against the ruins of some great building, and erect columns in a spot where my imagination has a difficulty in picturing them? How many pictures have been spoilt by this precept: *beautify nature*. Do not try to beautify nature. Choose carefully the subject which suits you, and represent it faithfully. In an historical picture let the dress be modern or antique according to the date, and do not give plumed hats to the Jews in a picture of the Crucifixion.

Banish from your composition every unnecessary figure, which, if it does not aid the action, chills it. Do not let your figures be scattered singly here and there, but arrange them in groups; let the groups also be linked together, and let the figures be contrasted, not with the forced contrast of the academical model which the student follows too much instead of observing nature, but let them be thrown up by those behind, and let it be contrived that the parts which are hidden be suggested to the imagination, which should be able to see the whole figure. Let the lights be skilfully arranged to form masses, not spots of light scattered here and there; nor must they be regular ovals, squares, or parallelograms, for such symmetrical forms would be

displeasing to the eye when the subject is to be represented picturesquely and not geometrically. Observe the laws of perspective strictly, and take advantage of the folds of draperies to produce effects; you will find that they are very useful if properly managed, but do not let your contrivance be perceived either in this or any other artistic arrangements.

These are the general laws of composition, from which we can hardly deviate without falling into error; but I may add that just as an author may describe an event from the historical or from the poetical point of view, in like manner a painter may treat his subject historically or poetically. In the former case all imaginary creatures, all personified qualities should be banished; history requires truth; such things are not given in the battles of Alexander. In the second case only the well-known allegorical figures should be given, lest we obscure the meaning of the subject which we wish to represent clearly.

A composition may easily be rich in figures yet poor in ideas; another may suggest many ideas and yet represent only one figure. Does not the presence in a picture of a hermit or of a philosopher absorbed in meditation make us more conscious how solitary is this solitude? If you paint a torrent dashing down a mountain-side, and you wish to increase my feeling of awe, imitate Horace and place a shepherd among

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the rocks listening with terror to the roaring torrent. We cannot too often urge painters to study the great poets, and poets in their turn to examine the works of the great artists; the former will thus educate their taste and gain noble ideas, the latter will be trained to accuracy and truthfulness. How many descriptions we admire in poetry, which, if translated into painting, would be absurd. There is hardly one of those poems called *Temples* which does not err in that respect. We read these *Temples* with pleasure, but the architect who tries to realize the building as he reads the poet's description usually finds that the reality would be ill-arranged and wanting in beauty.

A painter who loves what is grand, noble, and simple will be especially attracted to Homer and Plato. Every one knows that Homer is full of scenes studied from nature, but Plato is less known as a master in this way, yet I consider that he is in no wise inferior to this respect to Homer. The introductions to his dialogues are masterpieces of picturesque beauty, and the artist will often find passages in the dialogues which are well worth his study.

MY STRANGE THOUGHTS ON DRAWING

NATURE does nothing without reason. Every form, be it beautiful or ugly, has its cause; and of all living beings there is not one which is not as it must necessarily be. Look at that woman who lost her eyes when she was young. The eyelids have not been pressed forward by the growth of the eyeball, and have, therefore, sunk back into the cavity of the eye and become smaller. The eyebrows have been affected by this action of the upper lids, while the cheeks have been slightly drawn upward by the action of the lower lids; the upper lip has been influenced by this and is slightly raised. Every part of the face has been more or less altered as it happened to be nearer or farther from the injured part. Nor was it the face alone which became affected; the throat did not escape, nor the neck and shoulders. Perhaps it is hardly perceptible to your eyes or mine; but compare these outlines with those of another figure; ask Nature if there is any difference, and Nature will answer, "This

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is the throat and neck, these are the shoulders of a woman who lost her eyes when she was young."

* * * * *

If I were initiated into the mysteries of art, I should perhaps be able to tell you how far the artist is to follow the strict laws of proportion. But this I know, that Nature overrules them, and that the age and circumstance of the subject oblige us to modify them in a hundred different ways. I never heard that a figure was considered to be badly drawn, when it showed clearly by its outlines the age, circumstances, and the habitual occupation of the subject, for it is the routine of daily life which puts its impress on every limb, and also on the figure taken as a whole. Thus I may see fitly represented the child, the grown man, the grey head, the savage, the civilized man, the magistrate, the soldier, and the porter. The hardest thing to draw would be the figure of a man of twenty-five, who had sprung suddenly out of the ground and done nothing as yet; but that man is purely imaginary. Both childhood and old age are, if I may say so, caricatures. The child is a fluid, shapeless mass trying to develop itself; the old man is also shapeless, but dry and tending to reabsorption and annihilation. It is only in the interval between these two extremes, when vigorous manhood begins and until its close, that the artist can follow strictly the outlines before him

in all their precision, and that the *poco piu* or *poco meno*, slight individual differences, add or take away from the beauty of form. But you will say, however the age or occupation may alter the form yet the organs remain. Quite so, and, therefore, you must know them; I allow this. And, therefore, it is necessary to study anatomy.

The study of anatomy has its advantages, but the danger is lest the artist should bear it too much in mind, lest he should wish to show off his knowledge, that his eye should be led astray from the outward form, and that in spite of the flesh he should always be thinking of the muscle, of where it springs from, and how it is fixed and joined. He may dwell on all this too much, and become dry and hard and show the muscles too much, even in his female figures.

I am told that anatomy is studied in order to be able to observe nature; but experience shows that, after studying it, it is hard to see Nature as she really is.

You have spent seven years, you say, at the Academy, drawing from models. Do you think they were well spent, and shall I tell you what I think about it? I believe that in those seven laborious years you learnt *mannerisms* in drawing. All those stiff academical and prearranged positions, all those gestures which a poor fellow has to express coldly and

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awkwardly (for he is paid by the professor to come three times a week and pose in the nude in the required position), what has all this in common with Nature and its positions and gestures? What is there in common between the man who draws water from the well in your yard, and the man who, not having the same burden, simulates the action and stands with his arms raised on the platform of the studio? What is there in common between the man who pretends to be dying and the man who is really drawing his last breath on his bed, or who is knocked down in the street? What likeness is there between this wrestler in the schools and the fighter in the ring?

Is there anything in common between this model who prays, and sleeps, and reflects, and faints as he is told, and the peasant lying weary on the ground, or the philosopher meditating by his fireside, or the man who sinks fainting in the stifling crowd?

While drawing from the model the imagination becomes filled with false gestures and positions, with cold and lifeless forms; the truth of Nature is forgotten; the artist can think of nothing but the models he has studied. Every time he takes up his pencil or his brush those wretched phantoms rise up before him; he cannot forget them or drive them out of his head. I knew a clever young artist who, before he would draw a line on canvas, used to kneel down and pray, "Good

Lord, deliver me from the model." If nowadays you can rarely see a picture containing groups of figures without recognizing some academical figure, or action, or gesture which is very offensive to a man of taste, and which can only please those who are ignorant of the truth of Nature, you must lay the blame on the constant study of models in the Academy.

The Academy does not teach the general harmony of movements, a harmony which is felt and seen and extends from head to foot. If a woman allows her head to droop forward, all the limbs feel the force of the downward movements.

Again, if she raises her head, all the rest of the body obeys the same impulse.

Yes, it requires skill to pose a model; you should see how proud the professor is of his work, and don't suppose that he would ever think of telling the poor hireling, "My good friend, stand in any posture you like." No, he prefers to put him in some forced attitude than to let him place himself in an easy and natural posture; and yet that is what he should do. I have been tempted a hundred times to say to the students whom I passed on their way to the Louvre, with their portfolios under their arms, "How long have you been studying there? Two years. Well, that is quite long enough. Do give up all that artificial work. Go to Chartreux, and there you will

paid a visit one day to David, and saw a picture which the artist was just finishing. He admired it and talked about the artist's meaning, and the noble ideas he attributed to him. David listened and frankly avowed that he had not been conscious of all these grand ideas. "What," said Diderot, "you did it from instinct without knowing what you were doing! That is better still!" David was greatly encouraged by this warm admiration expressed by a celebrated man, and it helped to develop his talent.

Diderot's motto was "rather to wear out than to rust out," and if we must sometimes regret a note of exaggeration in his writings, with a certain want of discretion and sobriety, though we lament his occasional coarseness and lapses from good taste, we must respect his kindly, sympathetic nature, his ready understanding, the acuteness and abundance of his ideas, his broad style of handling them, and the great freshness of his treatment of every subject he took up. This freshness he never lost in spite of the arduous tasks upon which he was engaged. Diderot was a man whom it is good to know and study, and in respect of date he is the great writer of modern democratic society.

long parallel rows of monks ; the stalls, the occupation, the dress is alike in all, and yet no two monks are alike. Do not strive to give any other contrast than those characteristics which distinguish each of them from his neighbour. This is real contrast ; all other is false and mean.

A FEW IDEAS OF MINE ON COLOUR

DRAWING gives the outward form, but colour gives life. It is the divine breath which animates the artist's creatures.

It is only the great artists who are good judges of drawing, but any one can judge colour.

We have plenty of artists who can draw well, but there are few good colourists. It is the same in literature; a hundred cold logicians to one great orator; ten great orators to one sublime poet. Some great question will suddenly produce an eloquent orator, but, in spite of what Helvetius says, we cannot make a man write ten good lines to save his life.

Go, my friend, into a studio, and watch an artist at his work. If you see him arranging his tints and half-tints very carefully all round his palette, or if a quarter of an hour's work has not disturbed all this, you may boldly say that that artist is cold by temperament and will never produce any great work. He is like a heavy, pedantic scholar, who, when he wishes to quote a passage, mounts up his ladder and takes down

the author he wants, opens the book, and, sitting down to his desk, copies out the passage, then mounts up his ladder again and replaces the volume. Those are not the ways of genius. The artist who has a strong feeling for colour sits before his canvas with his eyes fixed on it, his mouth open, his breath comes quick, his palette is in a state of chaos. And in this chaos he plunges his brush, and out of it he brings his creations—birds with all their varied plumage, flowers with their velvety texture, and the many-tinted foliage of trees, and the blue depth of sky, and the misty vapours that float therein, and the animals with their soft fur, and different markings, with their fiery eyes. He gets up and stands a little way off from his easel to look at his work ; and then he sits down again and you see appear under his touch the human form, drapery, cloth and velvet, damask and taffety, muslin, linen, or coarser stuff ; or you may see the ripe yellow pear dropping from the tree, or the unripe cluster of grapes on the vine.

But if colour is a thing which every one understands, why is it that there are so few good colourists ? And, again, why are there so many kinds of colourists, when colour is one in Nature ? The different formation of the eye will, of course, make a difference ; if it be weak and sensitive it will shrink from strong bright colour. The painter will dislike introducing into his

picture the effects which offend him in real things. He will avoid fiery red and startling whites, just as he would choose dull hangings for the walls of his room ; he will likewise paint in a low scale of colour, and he will generally make up for his want of strong colour by harmony of tones.

But why should not a man's disposition and moods influence his colouring ? If his thoughts are habitually sad, gloomy, and melancholy, if darkness reigns in his mind and in his studio, if he shuts out the light, if he seeks solitude and twilight, may you not expect that his picture, though vigorous, will be dull and sombre in tone ? If his liver is disordered, and he sees everything with jaundiced hue, will he not throw the same yellow tint over his picture which his disease casts over realities, so that, to his chagrin, he sees trees appear yellow which he knows to be green ?

You may be sure that a painter reveals himself in his work much more than a writer does. He may be able to overcome the tendencies of his own nature, and to leave his peculiarities behind for once ; just as a naturally taciturn man may on one occasion lift up his voice and speak ; but when that occasion is past he will relapse once more into his usual silence. An artist of melancholy temperament, or with weak eyes, may produce one vigorous painting, but he will soon relapse into his usual style of colour.

If the eye itself is affected it will inevitably place a mist between the artist and the forms which he paints, and will prevent his seeing and imitating nature accurately.

Again, the artist who takes up a colour in his brush does not always know what effect it will produce on his canvas. For by what does he judge this colour which he takes off his palette? Does he compare it with other isolated tints, or primitive colours? He must do more than this, he must look at it on his palette where he prepares it, and then by imagination see it in the place where he intends to put it. But how often he is mistaken in his judgment! When the colour leaves the palette for the canvas, where it must form part of the whole composition, it becomes modified, lowered, or heightened in tone by the adjacent colours, and its value is entirely changed. Then the artist modifies the colour, and gropes again and again to find the right tint; and in these endeavours his colour becomes more and more a mixture of different substances, which react on each other, and sooner or later produce discord. Therefore the harmony of a painting is generally the more durable in proportion as the artist has been certain of his effects, when he has used his brush boldly and freely, with frankness and simplicity, without retouching his colour.

Modern pictures sometimes lose harmony of tone

in a very short time, while one may see pictures by the old masters which remain fresh, harmonious, and vigorous after a long lapse of time.

It seems to me that this advantage is the result, not so much of the quality of the colours, as the reward of the artist's firmness of touch. Nothing appeals so much in a picture as truth of colour: the ordinary spectator and the connoisseur alike feel it; the former may pass over a masterpiece of drawing, expression, and composition, but his eye will not fail to be attracted by the colourist.

But the reason why it is rare to find a true colourist is that the student follows his master. He copies his master for a long time, and does not look at nature; that is, he accustoms himself to look at things through the eyes of another, and thus loses the power of observation. Little by little he gets into a groove of formal rules, from which he cannot swerve or set himself free; he has put fetters on his eyes, as a slave wears them on his feet. And this is why there are so many false colourists; he who copies La Grénée will be brilliant and solid, he who copies Le Prince will love red and brickdust; he who copies Greuze will be grey and purple in tone; he who studies Chardin's style will be accurate. From this comes the great variety of opinions on drawing and colour, even among artists. One will tell you that Poussin is dry; another

that Rubens exaggerates, and I—I am the Lilliputian who claps them gently on the shoulder and tells them they are talking nonsense.

It has been said that the most beautiful colouring is that soft red tint seen on the cheeks of a young, healthy, and modest girl; this is well and feelingly said, and it is also true, yet what is more difficult to give than this flesh tint, this delicate white which yet is not dull or lifeless, this mingling of red and blue, which is the blood coursing under the skin; it is this living effect which is the despair of the colourist. He who can paint flesh tints truly has made wonderful progress, for all the rest is nothing in comparison. A thousand painters have died without being able to paint flesh, and a thousand more will die without being able to paint it. The variety also of our stuffs and draperies has contributed not a little to bring the art of colouring to perfection. It is difficult to withstand the charm of harmony in colouring. I hardly know how to put my meaning clearly; but imagine the portrait of a lady in white satin; cover the rest of the picture so as to see the dress only, and perhaps the satin may appear to you dull and dirty and untrue in tones, but now see the figure with all its surroundings, and then the colour of the satin will appear in harmony with the rest. The truth is that the whole tone of the picture is too low, but as every object loses colour in the same

proportion, the loss is not observed, and only the general harmony is felt ; it is nature seen in twilight.

The general tone may therefore be low without being false, if harmony be preserved ; the difficulty lies rather in keeping bright colours harmonious. To paint white or to paint a strong light are two very different things, and if other things are equal you will certainly be most pleased with the more luminous picture ; it is the difference between day and night.

Whom do I then consider the great and true colourist ? It is he who paints nature in bright light, and can yet preserve harmony of tone in his picture.

You might imagine that the study of birds and flowers would be useful to the colourist : not so, they will never train you to a feeling for flesh tints.

But ask the artist who can paint flesh to paint drapery, or a sky, or a carnation, or a plum with the bloom on it, and see how well he will do it. And how is it that Chardin can paint still life so well ? Because he can paint flesh. But it is the changefulness of the flesh tints which drives the colourist wild, for from one moment to another it glows or pales, and while the artist's eye is on his canvas and he is painting me I have changed, and he finds me no longer the same when he looks up. I happened to think of the Abbé de Blanc, and the thought of him made me yawn. Then the Abbé Trublet came into my head, and an ironical

smile passed over my face. Then I saw, mentally, my dear friend Grimm or my Sophie, and my heart began to beat, and tenderness and joy beamed on my countenance, exuded through the pores of my skin, dilated my heart, and sent the blood coursing through my veins, and flushed my cheeks. If flowers and fruit appear to change while La Tour and Bachelier observe them, how much more must they be embarrassed by the human face, that moving canvas which changes in form and colour with all the ever-varying feelings of that subtle breath we call the soul.

WHAT EVERY ONE KNOWS ABOUT EXPRESSION, AND SOMETHING WHICH ALL THE WORLD DOES NOT KNOW

"Sunt lachrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt."

VIRG., "*Æneid*," Lib. I. v., 466.

X EXPRESSION is generally the sign of some particular feeling. An actor who knows nothing about painting is a poor actor ; a painter who is not a physiognomist is a poor painter. In every part of the world, each country, each district of that country, each town of that district, each family of that town, and each individual of that family has each moment his peculiar physiognomy and expression. A man may be either angry, or attentive, or curious ; he loves, hates, scorns, disdains, admires ; and each one of these states of feeling impresses itself in clear and unmistakable characters on his countenance.

I say on his countenance, but it is shown in each feature, his mouth, his cheeks, his eyes ; they light up, they grow dull, they languish, the look wanders or

becomes staring. A painter's imagination is a storehouse of a vast number of impressions of this kind. Each of us has his own little collection, and thus forms his own judgment of beauty or ugliness. Pay attention, and ask yourself what it is which attracts or repels you when you look at a man or a woman, and you will find that it is always the signs of some good quality, or the marks of evil qualities in the expression of the face.

Imagine the statue of Antinöus before you. The features are regular and beautiful. The full cheeks show health; and we admire health, it is the cornerstone of happiness. The countenance is tranquil, and the feeling of repose pleases us. He looks wise and thoughtful; and we love wisdom and thoughtfulness. I will leave the rest of the figure and confine my remarks to the head.

Let the features remain as they are, but just lift up one corner of the mouth, and the expression will be ironical and less pleasing. Let the mouth return to its original state, and raise the eyebrows; it will give the effect of pride and be less pleasing. Now raise both corners of the mouth and let the eyes be wide open, and you will have a cynical face, and if you are a father you will not care to trust your daughter to that man. Let the corners of the mouth fall down, and drop the eyelids till they half conceal the pupils, and you will have made

the face that of a deceitful, designing man, whom you will certainly avoid.

In society each class of citizens has its own character and expression, the artisan, the nobleman, the commoner, the man of letters, the ecclesiastic, the magistrate, the soldier.*

Amongst artisans also there are the bodily habits and the physiognomies produced by the shop and trade. Each society has its own form of government, and each form has its salient quality, real or imagined, which is its spirit, its motive, and its support.

Equality is the dominating note of a republic; each subject considers himself a small king; therefore the expression of the republican is haughty, proud, severe.

In a monarchy there are two classes, those who command and those who obey; the character and expression produced are those of affability, grace, gentleness, honour, and gallantry.

Under a despotism we shall see on each countenance the influence of slavery, and we shall have gentle, timid faces, with a modest expression, deprecating and entreating. The slave walks with head bent; he seems always expecting the sword to fall on his neck.

* "Mulready would dwell fondly on any traces left on the body by special habits; he would trace out the signs of previous occupations, and so amuse himself by drawing up a biography of his model."—Article on Mulready, by Lady Dilke. *Fortnightly Review*, September, 1892.—[Translator's note.]

Let us first of all draw a noble type of head. It is easier to paint the passions on a fine countenance. And the stronger the passions depicted the more terrible are they. The Eumenides of the old Greeks were beautiful, but were none the less awful. If we are at the same time greatly attracted and greatly repelled our emotion of fear will be increased; and this will be the effect produced by one of the Eumenides when she retains her grand and noble features.

For a man a long oval, broad in the upper part, narrowing below, produces a fine head.

For a woman and child the oval is rounder, which gives an expression of youth and grace.

A hair's-breadth difference in the drawing of a feature will make it more or less beautiful.

What we call grace is when the motion of the limbs is exactly suited to the action. Do not take the ideas of an actor or of a drawing-master on this subject.

Marcel's idea of grace is quite the contrary to that of the limbs in natural action. If Marcel met a man in the attitude of Antinōus he would put one hand under his chin and another on his shoulders. "Come now, you great booby," he would say, "is that the way to hold yourself?" Then pushing in his knees with his own and raising him up under the arms he would add, "One would think you were made of wax and were going to melt. Come, you fool, straighten this leg,

display your figure, and don't drop your chin." And when he had made him look like a prim dandy he would begin to smile and be pleased with the effect of his own work.

If you cannot feel the difference in aspect between a man in society and a man full of eager action, between a man as he is alone or when he knows himself observed, you may throw your brushes into the fire.

You will academize, you will pose, you will stiffen all your figures.

Shall I explain this difference to you? You are sitting alone, waiting for my articles which have not come; you think that great people ought not to be kept waiting. You are lying back in your straw chair, your hands on your knees, your night-cap well over your forehead, and your hair straggling or turned back carelessly under a comb; your dressing-gown is half open and falls down in long folds on each side, you look handsome and picturesque. But the door opens, the Marquis de Castries is announced, and you push back your night-cap, you fold your dressing-gown carefully together, and there you are, stiff, upright, with all your limbs in proper position, mannered *and marcelized* to please the visitor. The *artist* would be disgusted at the change; you were picturesque before—you are so no longer.

A SHORT COROLLARY FROM THE PRECEDING ARTICLE

BUT what is the use of all these principles if taste is a capricious thing and if there is no eternal unchangeable law of beauty?

If taste is merely a matter of caprice, if there is no law of beauty, whence come those delicious emotions which rise suddenly and involuntarily and tumultuously from the depths of our being, which loosen or tighten our heart-strings and force tears of joy, grief and admiration from our eyes at the sight of some grand physical phenomenon, or the hearing of some lofty moral trait of character? Begone, sophist, you will never persuade my heart that it did wrong to beat quicker, nor my emotions that they ought not to have been deeply stirred.

The true, the good, and the beautiful are very nearly connected. Add to either of the first two qualities some rare and striking circumstance and the true will be beautiful and the good will be beautiful.

If the solution of the problem of the movements of

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three bodies merely refers to three points on a scrap of paper, it is of no importance, it is a purely speculative truth. But if one of these bodies is the star that lights us by day, and the second is the sphere that lights us by night, and the third is the globe we live in, the speculative truth immediately becomes sublime and beautiful.

One poet said of another poet : *He will not go far, he has not found the secret.* What secret? That of describing objects of real interest, fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children.

A LETTER TO MY FRIEND M. GRIMM

(Prefixed to the "Salon" of 1765)

NON fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem cogitat.

"He seeks to obtain not smoke from flame, but light from smoke." If I have learnt to reflect carefully on pictures and sculpture, it is to you, my friend, that I owe it. I should otherwise have followed the idle crowd at the Salon, and, like them, have cast careless glances at the works of our artists. In fact, I should have been ready to throw some precious work of art to the flames, or have extolled to the skies some third-rate performance, liking or disliking according to my own caprice without seeking for reasons for my preferences and dislikes.

It was you who set me my task and told me to examine these canvases and study these statues. I have allowed my thoughts to dwell on them and thrown my mind open to the impressions they produce; and I have given the impressions time to sink in. I have listened to the criticism of the greybeard, to the

thought of the child, to the judgment of the literary man and the man of fashion, and to the expression of popular opinion. If perchance I have wounded the artist it is often he himself who has sharpened my weapon. I have learnt from his work to appreciate delicacy of drawing and truth to Nature; he has taught me the magic of light and shade, and to appreciate colour and flesh tints. I have meditated on all I have seen and heard and those terms of art which were formerly so familiar, yet so vague to me: unity, variety, contrast, symmetry, arrangement, composition, character, expression, have all acquired in my mind a definite meaning.

Oh, my friend, how long and difficult and painful is the study of all these arts, whether painting or sculpture, music or poetry, carving or engraving, where we seek to imitate Nature.

Remember what Chardin used to say to us at the Salon: "Gentlemen, gentlemen, be lenient in your judgments. For, look at the worst of the pictures exhibited here, and know that two thousand wretches have thrown away their brushes in despair of doing anything like it. Le Moine said that it took thirty years to know how to preserve one's first sketch, and Le Moine was no fool. If you attend to me, you will perhaps learn to be indulgent."

Chardin seemed to doubt whether any profession

required such long and severe studies as painting; he did not even except the medical or legal professions or a doctor of the Sorbonne. "They put a pencil into our hand," he used to say, "when we are seven or eight years old, and we begin to copy drawings of eyes and ears, and noses and mouths, and then hands and feet. We must stoop a long time over our drawing-board before we are placed in front of Hercules, and you little know what tears have been caused to be shed by the Satyr, the Gladiator, the Venus de Medicis, and the Antinöus.

"At last, after days and nights of toil, we are put before Nature herself, and all the studies of the previous years seem to profit us nothing; we feel as helpless as when a pencil was first put into our hands. The eye must be taught to observe Nature, and how many have never seen her, and never will. We have been copying for five or six years before we are left to express our own talent, if we have any. And we cannot at first know what our powers are.

"We make many attempts, some of which succeed and some fail. How many precious years have been spent before the pupil gives up in despair; he is, perhaps, nineteen or twenty years old then, and is left without a profession, without resources, and without morals. What is he to do? What is to become of him? He must take up one of those inferior posts

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which are the refuge of poverty or else die of starvation.

"Some twenty or so escape this fate, and come here every two years to be at the mercy of the wild beasts; but the others, unknown by the world, but, perhaps, less unhappy, are to be found in the fencing school, or shouldering a musket in some regiment, or treading the boards of some theatre."

Chardin used to tell a story of one of his friends, whose son had become a drummer-boy, that, when asked about his son, he answered, "He has forsaken painting for music;" and added, more seriously, "All fathers do not take their sons' failures as cheerfully as I do. It is only a few of the vast number of art students who achieve more or less success. He who has never felt the difficulty of expressing himself in art will never produce anything of value; he who, like my son, feels it too soon, does nothing at all. I believe that most of the high posts in the world would remain vacant if they could only be gained by passing an examination as severe as that which we artists undergo."

It is surprising that, in spite of all the pains which are taken by the Government to stifle the sciences, the arts and philosophy, it has not yet succeeded in doing so. It almost confirms me in the idea that you might pour out sacks of gold at the feet of genius, but in vain; it would not take it, for gold is not the recompense

it seeks; it is the vanity, not the cupidity, of genius which you must satisfy; compel it to sleep on a straw bed in a garret, give it only crusts of bread, and water to drink; you may provoke, but will not extinguish it. Now, there is no place in the world where genius is more promptly and fully recognized than here. The State may crush, but the nation exalts it; and genius toils and produces, though chafing and starving the while.

EXTRACTS FROM "LE SALON,"

1767

DOYEN : THE MIRACLE OF ARDENS

I KNOW that some timid spectators have turned aside from this scene with horror, but I am not so easily frightened. Have I not found pleasure in Homer's description of the crows gathered round a corpse, pecking out its eyes, and flapping their wings with joy? I should like to understand the reasons for the very various criticisms that I have heard on this very passage in Diomed's speech. A corpse in itself is not disgusting; as long as putrefaction has not begun, good taste will not reject the presence of a dead body, either in poetry or painting. But the pecking out of the eyes is a very different thing. I close mine in order not to see the crows' beaks, the bleeding eyeballs; the cruel bird, flapping its wings with delight, is horribly impressive. What ought to be the general impression produced by such a description? It will vary according to the point on which the imagination dwells. On

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what point, therefore, ought the imagination to choose to dwell? Should it be the corpse? No, there is nothing in that to arrest the attention. Should it be the torn-out eyes? No, there is something more striking, that of the bird flapping its wings with joy. We observe, too, that this image is presented last, and thus enables us to pass lightly over the disgusting details which precede it. It makes a great difference in a description in what order the images are presented to us, whether we say, "I see the crows flapping their wings with joy around thy corpse, and pecking out thine eyes;" or whether, as the poet puts it, "I see the crows gathered round thy corpse, pecking out thine eyes, while they flap their wings with joy."

Observe, my friend, that this last detail is what strikes you and prevents your dwelling on the rest. Good taste, therefore, can inspire the artist how to arrange his images so as to make us pass lightly over this or that detail, and to lead our imagination to fix its gaze on the point he chooses. This is what Homer has done in the passage quoted.

I think I have already remarked in some of my papers (where I meant to show that a nation could only have one grand century, and that in this grand century there was only one moment able to give birth to a great man) that every fine composition and every real work of talent in painting, sculpture, architecture,

eloquence, and poetry, presupposes a certain mingling of reason and enthusiasm, of judgment and impulse in the artist's disposition: a disposition which is rarely found, and only rarely manifested—an equilibrium of qualities without which an artist's productions are cold or extravagant. This is the reef on which I fear Doyen may be wrecked; I fear that, carried away by the success of his pictures—a success due more to the poetical idea than to the technical execution (for it is in truth only a magnificent sketch)—he may overstep the limits of good art and become exaggerated in style. He is on the boundary line, and one step more would lead him into confusion and disorder.

You tell me that you prefer the extravagant to the commonplace; so do I. But there is a medium between the two which we both prefer.

I am not surprised that the public have considered Doyen's picture as the best in the Salon. The expression of strong feelings, a wild-eyed demoniac foaming at the mouth and twisting his arms, will be more appreciated by the multitude than the nude figure of a beautiful woman lying quietly asleep.

The multitude is not conscious of the imperceptible charms which enchain us; they cannot feel the softness, the truth to nature, the voluptuous grace of this figure. It is you and I who are wounded and carried captive; we are irresistibly bound by its charms: *Æterno*

devincti vulnere amoris. (Subdued by the eternal wound of love.)

But are we quite sure that any scene in Terence is not as vigorous as any by Molière, or that the Antinöus is not as fine as any work by Michael Angelo? I have on another occasion given my opinion without sufficiently weighing my words. But I am constantly liable to such errors because language does not supply me with the proper words to express my true opinion. I give up pressing an argument because I cannot find words to express my reasons. I have an idea at the bottom of my mind, and yet I say something different. A man who lives alone has the advantage over me; he talks to himself, he questions himself, and listens, and listens in silence. His inmost thoughts have time to develop themselves slowly, and to clothe themselves in words so appropriate that they reveal the truth to others and convince them. *O rus quando te aspiciam.*

CASANOVA : A BATTLE SCENE

The painter has succeeded as well as one could expect from a man who has never seen a battle. The ancient Scandinavians took their bards with them into battle. They placed them in the centre of their army and said, "Watch us fight and die. Be the living

witness of our valorous deeds. Sing what you have seen, that our memories may endure for ever in our native land, and let this be the reward of all the blood we have shed for her." The sacred bards were equally honoured by friend and foe. After the battle they strung their harps and drew from them joyful or sad notes, according as their army had been victorious or had been defeated. Their imagery was simple, forcible and true. It is said that a ferocious conqueror having murdered all the enemy's bards, and one only having escaped, he climbed a high peak and there chanted the defeat of his fellow-countrymen ; he called down curses on the cruel victor, foretold the evils that awaited him, consigned him and his people to be for ever forgotten, and then threw himself down from the cliff. It was a religious duty among these early tribes to chant the prowess of those who had had the good fortune to die sword in hand. Ossian, chief, warrior, poet, and musician, heard the trees shuddering round his home at night ; he rose and cried out, "Souls of departed friends, I hear you ; you reproach me my silence." He took his harp and sang, and when he had sung he added, "Souls of my departed friends, now have I made you immortal ; sleep content, and let me sleep." A blind bard had himself led in his old age to the graves of his children ; there he sat, placing his hands on the cold stone which covered their ashes, and sang

of their deeds while the breeze, or rather the wandering souls of his departed children, gently swayed his long white beard.

Noble customs and noble poetry ! In order to paint or to write one must have seen for one's self. M. Casanova, have you ever been present at a battle ? No ; well then, however lively your imagination may be, your work will be commonplace. Follow the army, go and see for yourself, and then paint.

ROBERT

It is a fine thing, my friend, to travel, but to be always wandering over the face of the earth, one must have lost one's parents, one's children, and one's friends, if one ever had any. What would you say if the owner of a fine palace spent all his time in going from the cellars to the attics, and from the attics to the cellars, instead of quietly sitting among his family by his own hearth ? Yet that is what the traveller does. Either he is a man without principles, or he is tormented by a sort of natural restlessness, which drives him forth in spite of himself. Nature, who watches over our preservation, has endowed us not only with more or less inertia or stability, but also with a certain amount of energy which urges us continually to motion and action. These opposite tendencies are rarely evenly balanced,

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and we are apt either to be indolent or over active, and a man dies rusting from inaction, or worn out by over-fatigue. The wild animal in the forest awakes, he pursues and devours his prey, and then falls asleep. In cities, where a certain number of persons are sacrificed in order to provide for the wants of others, the unused energy of the latter is expended on different objects. I run after an idea because some poor wretch has pursued and caught a hare for my food. If some individual has not his share of inertia, but is possessed of a superabundant energy, he is, as it were, seized by an innate force and thrown to the tropics or the poles; such a man was Anquetil, who went to remote parts of Hindostan to study the sacred language of Brahma. If he had been in a savage state he would have chased a stag with equal ardour. We do not know the secret cause of our most heroic actions. A man will tell you that he is impelled by a thirst for knowledge, and that he leaves his country and tears himself away from his father and mother, and endures a thousand perils in distant countries in order to bring back a store of useful and scientific facts. But don't believe him. He was merely tormented by superabundant energy. And you, great Choiseul, you keep the watches of the night for the sake of your country! You may delude yourself with this idea, but the fact is you watch because you cannot sleep. Sometimes this fiery energy is hidden in

the depths of a man's heart, and he is bored until he finds a suitable outlet for his energy. Sometimes he wanders about restlessly, looking here and there, taking up first one thing and then another, now trying some tool or garb, and anon dropping it, until he finds what he was searching for, and what his native energy could not reveal for him, for she is blind. There are some, and alas! they are the majority, whom she drives here and there to try everything, when they have a capacity for nothing. These last are condemned to be always moving and yet never advancing a step. Sometimes it is a misfortune, the loss of a friend, of a lover, which cuts the thread which kept the spring bent, then the restless soul starts off wandering as long as his legs will carry him. To him all corners of the earth are alike; if he stands still he must perish. When the natural energy is driven in on itself the wretched being becomes melancholy, weeps and sobs and groans, or the man may be drawn in two opposite directions and take the diagonal; then he will arm himself with a pistol or a dagger, or follow a path which leads him into a river or over a precipice, and the struggle of the proud heart and inflexible spirit will be ended. O ye happy mortals who remain inert, stupid, and torpid, you can eat and drink and sleep, and grow old and die without having known joy or suffering, without having felt any vibration through that mass that weighed you down on this

earth, where you were born. No one knows where the grave of the man of energy may be—yours is always under your feet.

You will ask what I mean by this long digression on travels and travellers? What have my ideas on them, whether true or false, to do with the ruins of Robert? I intend instead of giving a dull description of all these ruins, for he has a great number, to imagine them in some country, in Italy for example, and for this purpose I read the Abbé Richard's "Travels in Italy." I could not glean from it one idea which was the least use to me, and in a fit of vexation I cried, "A fine thing indeed to travel." Here are some of the things I gather from the Abbé Richard—that "in Italy a man drops his religion as soon as he steps out of church and takes up his old vices with renewed zest in the street," that among the sublimest examples of art of all kinds, painting and sculpture are waning in Italy. The artists copy well, but produce no fine works of their own. He mentions also Le Quesnoi's answer to an amateur who watched him painting, and was afraid that he would spoil his picture by trying to finish it too much. "You are right in your opinion, because you only see the copy, but I am also right because I am pursuing the original, which is in my mind's eye." This is like the story told of Phidias, who, when he was preparing to make a statue of Jupiter, would look

at no earthly model, for it would have drawn down his thoughts earthward, while he trusted to his imagination to furnish him with a heavenly ideal.

A LANDSCAPE IN THE ITALIAN STYLE

I should like to see this picture out of the Salon. I think that some pictures may lose as much in the way of merit by the effect of their neighbours and by the contrasts of one with another as they lose in size by the immense space in which they are hung. A large picture like this appears only of a moderate size here. There are pictures which I had passed carelessly by in the Salon, and when I have seen them alone, apart, I felt that I had hardly done them justice. On the other hand, "Pompey's head presented to Cæsar" was something important on the artist's easel, while in the Louvre it is insignificant. Is it that our eyes get tired and dazzled by so many different styles, and lose their power of judging? Is it that we take some fine composition, vigorous in colour and noble in style, as our standard, and all the rest after that appear poor and feeble and weak in colour in comparison? And yet it is certainly true that if I were to tell you that La Grénée's monkey-like Cæsar was larger than life you would not believe me. Why is it, then, that the condition of wide space does not produce the same

effect on all the pictures alike? Why do some large compositions look smaller to me, while some small ones look larger? Why, in a picture no bigger than my hand, do the figures appear six, seven, eight, nine feet high, while in another composition where the figures really have that height they lose it and appear to me to be half that size?

We must look for the explanation of this phenomenon either in the figures themselves, or in their relation to the surrounding objects.

In this picture of Robert we see on the right the ruins of an old building, with a niche where the artist has placed a statue. At the foot of the statue is a spring of running water, which falls into a basin. All this part of the picture is good in colour and effect; the rest is grey, gloomy, undefined, the work of a pupil who has completed badly what the master had begun well. But in order to realize how feeble the picture is as a whole one need only compare it to one by Vernet. What a dangerous neighbour Vernet is! He makes every one near him suffer, while he remains unaffected himself by any one. It is he, M. Robert, who knows how with infinite skill to blend action and repose, light and darkness, silence and sound. When we find one of these qualities strongly marked in a composition we are arrested and impressed. How much more than when we find them united and contrasted? His hand, too, is so

skilful to depict all that his imagination is quick and fertile to invent. In his work we find the vigour of nature and none of her faults; one object never seems to be sacrificed for the sake of another. All is pervaded by a breath of life, a spirit, of which it might be said, as Virgil or Lucretius sang of the entire work of creation—

“Deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum,
Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum
Quemque sibi tenues nascentum arcessere vitas,
Scilicet huc reddi, deinde hinc resoluta referri
Omnia; nec morti esse locum.”

“It is in the presence of a God which makes itself felt on the surface of the earth, in the depths of ocean, in the vast stretch of skies. It is from Him that men and animals, flocks and wild beasts derive the subtle breath of life. All came from Him and all return, and there is no place for death anywhere.” All that you read in the poets about the creation of the world out of chaos is applicable to this artist.

Say of him—

“Spiritus alit, totamque infusa per artus.
Mens agitat molem, et magno, se corpore miscet!”

“An indwelling spirit, which spreads through the whole mass, giving it movement, and mingling with its entire substance;” for every word of it can be applied to him.

A GREAT VAULTED CLOISTER LIGHTED AT THE END

How sublime and how grand are these ruins ! What force and yet delicacy and ease and accuracy in the brush that painted them. Tell me to whom these ruins belong that I may steal them ; the sole way of obtaining anything when one is poor. Alas ! they are probably thrown away on some rich fool who owns them, while I should be so happy if I possessed them. I am struck with wonder at this ruined vault, and the mass of building above it. What nation raised this vast monument ? Where are the builders ? What has become of them ? Into what gloomy depths does my eye penetrate and lose itself ! How far away is that portion of sky which appears in the opening distance ! How well the gradations of light are given as it strikes down from above on the lofty columns ! How the darkness is driven back by the daylight at the entrance and again in the distance ! On the left hand outside is a fountain, above the fountain is an antique statue, a figure sitting, and below it is a basin raised on stone supports ; around the basin are a number of little figures, little groups, a variety of scenes ; here they are drawing water, there they are resting, or walking, or talking. The scene is full of action and movement ; I shall tell you presently my opinion on that, M. Robert. You are a clever

man, and will excel and do excel in your art, but study Vernet; learn of him to draw and to paint, and to make your figures interesting. And, as you have taken up the subject of ruins, learn that there is poetry to be found among them. You ignore this completely. You have technical skill, but you cannot idealize. Don't you feel that you have far too many figures here, and that you should get rid of three-fourths of them? You should only put in such as would add to the idea of solitude and silence. A solitary figure, with his arms crossed, and with head bowed, wandering in the gloom, would have affected me far more. The gloom, and the grandeur of the building, its vast extent and solemn calm, the echoing vaults, would all have combined to fill me with shuddering awe, and to draw me on to dream in those cloisters, and to sit between those columns. I should have entered there, but all those importunate figures drive away the charm; I stop for a moment to gaze, I admire, and I pass on. M. Robert, do you not yet know wherein the attraction of a ruin lies, beyond the pleasure of the broken outlines and forms. I will try and explain my ideas to you.

Ruins suggest noble thoughts to me; that everything decays and dies and passes away, only the world remains and time endures. What an old world it is! My path lies between two eternities. Wherever I cast my eyes I am reminded by the surrounding objects that

everything comes to an end, and I become resigned to the shortness of my own life. What is my ephemeral existence as compared to that of this work which crumbles away, or to this valley which is being hollowed out, to this forest whose trees are falling, to those shattered buildings above my head? I see that even the marble of tombstones falls with dust, and shall I refuse to die, or expect a feeble tissue of flesh and muscles to escape the doom which falls on bronze? A torrent is carrying on the nations one after another to a common abyss; and shall I, I alone, expect to reach the shore and stem the flood which is rushing past me?

If the ruin is a dangerous spot, I tremble; but if there is a sense of secrecy and security I feel freer, and can enjoy the complete solitude and the complete isolation, I can then feel completely left to my own reflections. It is there that I invoke the presence of my friend, of the woman I love—there no trouble, no witnesses, no jealousies will disturb us. It is there I can probe into my heart, that I can probe into hers. How far we shall be from all the tumult of crimes and passions and prejudices and errors of a great city! There I may give myself up to tender feelings, and enjoy a sweet calm. In that vast and solitary desert I shall hear nothing—the noise of life is far away. I may talk aloud to myself and complain, and shed tears, without a listener or any to disturb me. The bad man shuns solitude; the good

man seeks it, for he is at peace with himself. But the works of artists will be very differently esteemed according to whether the spectator is a student of the human passions or not; in the latter case they will say nothing to him, but how much will they say to me! The ruins I should visit he would fly from; that forest into whose depths I love to plunge he will avoid. What could he do there? He would only be bored.

A VERY SMALL RUIN (PICTURE BY ROBERT)

(After a detailed description)

A very good little picture, but it illustrates the difficulty of describing and understanding a description. The more details we recount, the more the picture we give in words differs from the picture as it is on the canvas. For the space which an object occupies in our imagination is always in proportion to the detailed enumeration of parts. You may describe a grub after such a fashion as to make your hearer fancy it is the size of an elephant; you need only give a very detailed account of the creature's anatomy. There is a custom which is very natural, and which is especially common among sensible people. They try to get a clear idea of a subject by exaggerating the details, otherwise these details, if seen in their real size, would not

produce sufficient impression on their minds. A detailed account of a matter is like grinding down a hard substance; it will then occupy ten or a hundred times as much space as before. M. de Reaumur never thought of this, but read some pages of his work on insects and you will be struck by the same absurdity as in my description of this picture. You can imagine from it that the ruin, instead of being about the size of my hand, occupied several square feet. I think that the eye and the imagination amongst artists occupies the same space of the field of vision; or rather, perhaps, the field of the imagination is in inverse ratio to that of the eye. It is quite impossible that long-sighted and short-sighted people can have the same mental imagery. Poets, prophets, and long-sighted persons are liable to see flies as big as elephants, but short-sighted philosophers on the contrary are liable to see elephants as small as flies. Poetry and philosophy are the two opposite ends of a telescope.

THE PORT OF ROME, WITH SOME ANCIENT AND
MODERN BUILDINGS

This is a very fine picture, full of grandeur and majesty; one admires it, but remains unmoved; it does not stir one's imagination, but is only a fine view where everything is grand but symmetrical. If you

were to draw a vertical line which should cut through the centre of the rotunda of the port you would have the same objects repeated on the right and left sides of it. There is more poetry and more variety, I will not say in a cottage, but in a single tree which has endured many winters and many storms, than there can be in the façade of a palace. You must turn a palace into ruins before you can make it interesting. So true it is that no technical skill can make up for the lack of imagination. The beauty of the idea will strike every one, but technical skill will only appeal to the connoisseur. It may be suggestive to him of art and the artist, but it will not reveal the real beauty of the object; he will remain outside that, to see but not to feel.

Real eloquence carries one away to forget the orator. If I am conscious that you are eloquent it shows that you were not sufficiently eloquent. Between the skill of the brush and the product of the imagination there is just the difference, that the one strikes the eye and the other penetrates to the soul. It has often been remarked that a man rarely becomes a great writer or a good critic and man of taste unless he has diligently studied the ancient authors. There is a simplicity in Homer and Moses of which we may perhaps say as Cicero did of the return of Regulus to Carthage: *Laus temporis non homini*. The manner

of time rather than special gifts produced this. The nations which were ruled by such customs and laws, and used such garments and ceremonies, could not but show the influence of them. This influence, which is a real one, we must seek in those early resources, and endeavour to transport it to our own corrupt and highly artificial times—times which yet love simplicity. We must learn to speak of modern things after the fashion of the ancients, and we really find that no artist excels unless he has visited Italy; and we may remark that the best pictures and the finest pieces of sculpture, works characterized by simplicity and dignity of design, by noble outlines and fine and harmonious colour, have been either produced in Rome or after having been in Rome. Those who pretend that this is owing to a clearer sky and a better light, or more luxuriant nature, forget that the pictures generally represent effects at night or mists and storms.

It seems to me much more reasonable to attribute the effect to the inspiration of fine works of art which are to be found everywhere in Italy. Wherever you go you come across Michael Angelo, Raphael, Guido, Titian, Corregio, Domenichino, or some of the Carraci. Those are the masters who are continually teaching, and what great masters they are! Le Brun lost his colouring in less than three years after leaving Italy; and, perhaps, it would be well to insist on a longer

sojourn in Rome for young artists, that their taste may have time to become established. A child will get a provincial accent and expressions if he is in the country for a few weeks ; while Voltaire, far away from the capital, on the shores of the lake of Geneva, preserved intact all the vigour and delicacy, the purity and elegance of his native tongue. Let our artists then make such a lengthened stay in Rome as will preserve them from being corrupted on their return by the want of fine models and of great monuments, by the evil influence of our petty ways and customs and our petty coxcombs. If we tend to great refinement in our capital we also tend to great corruption. Watteau was right to stay in Paris. Vernet should live by the seashore ; Louthembourg in the country. Boucher and his friend Baudouin will do well to haunt the Palais Royal.

I have often planned a visit to Italy, but I fear that it will never be carried out. Alas ! we shall never meet, dear friend, among those ancient buildings, sacred and silent, where men have so often met to confess their sins and acknowledge their errors. We shall never meet beneath those solemn vaulted roofs where our hearts would have dared to reveal themselves to each other and pour out many a secret joy and hidden grief, those mysteries of our life which we do not dare in ordinary life to confess even to our dearest friend.

Why does a good sketch please us more than a good picture? It is because there is in it more life and less defined forms. As forms become more accurately defined life departs. In dead animals, dreadful objects to our sight, the forms are there, but life is gone. In young animals, especially in kittens, the outlines are not strongly marked, yet they are full of life. Why is it that a pupil who is quite incapable of painting a tolerable picture can yet make a striking sketch? It is because a sketch is the work of enthusiasm and genius, and the picture is the result of industry and patience, and long studies and a ripe experience of art. Who has found the secret which nature herself does not possess of keeping the life of youth in the forms of advanced age? Perhaps one reason why we are strongly attracted by a sketch is that being undefined it leaves our imagination free to see what we like in it, just as children see shapes in the clouds, and we are all more or less children. (It is the same difference as that between vocal and instrumental music; in the former we listen to what it says, but in the latter we make it say what we choose.

Ut pictura poesis erit. "As it is in pictures so it is in poetry."

How often this has been said, but neither he who first said it nor those who repeated it afterwards have fully understood this maxim. The poet, like the

painter, has his palette, his different colours, and different shades of colour; he has his brush and his style; he may be dry or hard, crude or intricate; he may be vigorous and gentle, harmonious and simple. Language offers him a choice of words to produce his effects. He has his light and shade, whose origin and rules are in his own heart. You think, perchance, that you can write verses because you have learnt to arrange words in a certain order, and under certain conditions—you cannot paint, you can barely trace an outline.

You have not, and perhaps never could, acquire the least notion of rhythm. The poet has said—

*“Monte decumens velut amnis, umbres
Quem super notas aluere ripas,
Fervet, immensusque ruit profundo
Pindaris ore.”*

Who dares imitate Pindar? He is like a torrent whose waters fall with a mighty noise over a steep cliff. It seethes and boils and sweeps away every obstacle, and spreads out into a vast sea which no one can fathom. You have felt the beauty of this simile, but it is the rhythm which is everything here, it is the magic charm of prosody which perhaps you will never feel. You ask me what is rhythm? And I answer: it is the selection of particular words, a right distribution of long and short syllables, of sharp or dull tones, of light or heavy, of slow or rapid, gay or melancholy

sounds. It is, in fact, a rendering of our feelings by certain harmonies of vowels, emphasizing our thoughts by certain accents, or certain accents on certain syllables; trying to excite in others the impressions we have received, letting the natural voice of passion be heard, giving, in fact, by sound the character of the action or scene we are describing; and this art is no more a conventional thing than the effects of light in the colours of a rainbow. It cannot be learnt or imparted; it can only be cultivated and brought to perfection. It is inspired by natural taste, by the sensitiveness of a soul easily brought into vibration. Just as in speaking, the tones of our voice, loud or soft, harsh or gentle, rapid or lingering, energetic or choked with emotion, reveal the state of our inner selves. Listen to a child threatening his comrade; the tone is energetic and abrupt. Listen to the sick man dragging out his words slowly and painfully. Each uses the rhythm suited to his case without thinking about it. Boileau searches for it and often finds it. It seems to come naturally to Racine. Without this gift a poet hardly deserves to be read; he is wanting in colour. But if this rhythm is produced by study, it is apt to be affected and tedious. This is one of the chief differences between Homer and Virgil, Virgil and Lucan, Ariosto and Tasso. Feeling can produce an infinite variety of rhythms to suit its moods, but study cannot

do this. A cultivated taste and an educated ear may know when to use a spondaic line, and when to choose another, when to dry our tears, and when to let them flow, but it cannot by the sole magic of sound stir the imagination to see and the ear to hear the roaring waters of a torrent falling and dashing downwards, spreading over the plain and at last merging its mighty stream in the great ocean. It is nature alone which can give these harmonies and produce a poet. If a poet does not possess this gift, how he stumbles along, yet without some portion of this gift we can neither write well in prose nor in verse; I doubt if we can even speak properly or read aloud—but who knows how to read aloud? But where this music is heard it carries us on with irresistible charm, and may make the writer sacrifice sense to sound and yet leave us unconscious of the sacrifice he has made. It is this harmony which lends an ever fresh charm to a composition; we may recall a thought, but we cannot recall all the delicate effects of sound and linked harmonies. And this harmony which springs from the soul appeals to the soul and not merely to the ear. If a poet is harsh and dry and rugged, do not blame his ear, but his soul.

Colour is in painting what style is in literature. There are authors who have thoughts to express and painters who have ideas which they would realize on

canvas, and some of these authors know how to arrange their matter, and some of these painters understand the composition of a picture. There are clear and exact writers, and there are good draughtsmen ; but in all ages style in writing and colour in painting have been counted as rare and precious qualities. We must allow that the artist's fate does not entirely coincide with that of the writer. For it is style which ensures the immortality of a literary work, it is style which charms the reader now, and will charm other readers in centuries to come. On the other hand, colour fades, the picture loses by age, and if a painter has only a small circle of admirers among his contemporaries, he must trust to the engraver to transmit his renown, and his quality of colour is lost to posterity.

LOUIS MICHEL VAN-LOO.

This great artist was attached to the Spanish Court. The work he here exhibits is called, "A picture of the painter taking his father's portrait while his sister stands by."

This is a fine picture ; the artist is seated in the centre of the canvas, he is resting from his work, one arm is thrown over the back of the chair, and his legs are crossed. The sketch of his father's portrait is on the easel before him. His sister stands behind his

chair, and is depicted in a very true, simple, and natural manner. The painter's dressing-gown is silk with all its sheen, and his arm stands out in bold relief from the canvas. There is a certain family likeness well given in the three heads, they are broadly and nobly drawn; the whole picture is fine, and deserves much praise. And yet you will say, how far from Van Dyck's truth and Rembrandt's strength! But is there only one style in painting, I would ask, when there are so many different styles in writing? Homer is more vigorous than Virgil, Virgil is more full of wisdom than Tasso, while Tasso has more variety and charm than Voltaire, but am I for this reason to refuse admiration to this last? You moderns, so jealous of your contemporaries, when will you leave off making comparisons between them and the classical writers? Why do you not judge more impartially? Why shut your eyes to all the faults of the ancients, while admiring their beauties, and then open your eyes to the faults of the modern authors, and shut them to their beauties? Do you always wait till your favourite authors are dead till you praise them? What good will your praise do them then? I always regret that, among the many superstitions we have been taught, no one has thought of persuading men that in their graves they will hear the good and evil which men say of them.

It is strange what a variety of judgments are passed

by the multitude assembled in the Salon on the pictures before them. After wandering through the rooms in order to *see*, one ought to linger in order to *listen*. The fashionable people cast their eyes carelessly and contemptuously on the large compositions, and their attention is only arrested by the portraits of their acquaintances. The literary man does just the contrary; he passes quickly over the portraits, and studies carefully the large compositions. The ordinary folk look at everything, and understand nothing.

As long as portrait painters think only of taking a likeness without any thought of composing a picture I shall not say much about them; but when they become conscious that a portrait should also be a picture, with some composition to interest us, then I shall treat them with the respect due to historical painters, and I shall look at their work with pleasure, whether the portrait be a good likeness or not.

THE SHEEP-FOLD, BY BOUCHER.

Picture to yourself a vase on a pedestal standing in the background. It is adorned with green boughs, while below lies a shepherd asleep, with his head in the lap of a shepherdess. Now group around these a crook, a little hat full of roses, a dog, and some sheep; then place a little bit of landscape—no, I cannot tell you

how many details are heaped one on another—then paint the whole in the most brilliant colours, and you will have the sheep-fold of Boucher. How much talent is here thrown away; how much time lost. Twice as much might have been made of this with half the trouble. The eye finds no resting-place among so many objects, each carefully reproduced and calling for attention. There is no atmosphere, no repose. Yet the shepherdess is natural, and the little glimpse of landscape near the vase is charming, full of delicacy and freshness. But what do this vase and pedestal mean? Away with these heavy boughs on the top! Must a writer say everything that comes into his head? Must a painter paint everything that he sees? Pray ~~let something~~ be left to the imagination.

Monsieur Pierre, knight of a royal order, painter in chief to Monseigneur the Duc d'Orléans, and professor at the Academy of Painting, you don't care what you do, and you are more to be blamed for this than another might be. You are rich, you can easily procure good models, and can make as many studies as you like. You need not sell your pictures in order to pay your rent. You can take your own time to choose a subject, to arrange the composition, and to carry it out. You have been better educated than most of your brother artists; you know the best French writers, and can follow the Latin authors. Why, then, do you

not read them? They could not give you genius, it is true, for that is a gift of nature, but they would stimulate you, they would rouse noble ideas in your mind, they would stir your imagination, they would suggest subjects, and you might then paint them.

If any one quotes a single line from an epic poem it should be the finest; if one incident is taken from a great scene it should be sublime, that it may suggest the whole: *ex ungue leonem*. But, Monsieur Pierre, you suggest nothing. What a dull commonplace trade the critic's is! It is so difficult to produce anything of even mediocre value, and yet it is so easy to be conscious of mediocrity. I think that, looking from the most favourable point of view, I should regard the critic as one of those beggars who sift the sand of our rivers to seek for a few grains of gold. It is not a rich man's trade.

Let us have another little digression; I am describing all these pictures to you from my study, and I am tired; this digression will give me a rest.

Gather together a confused heap of things of all kinds and colours—linen, fruit, paper, books, stuffs, and animals—and you will see that the light and air, those two universal harmonizers, will harmonize them all—I know not how—by imperceptible reflections binding all tints together, so that all discords will be

softened down, and nothing will offend the eye in the mass as a whole. The musician, when he strikes the perfect chord of G and carries to our ear the discords of the higher harmonics, has reached this point; but the painter can never reach it. For the musician conveys the actual sounds to our ear, but the painter cannot place flesh, and blood, and wool, and sun, and air on his palette, but must use various earths, the juices of plants, calcined bones, and metals and stones ground down to represent the realities. It is, therefore, impossible for him to give the imperceptible reflections of one colour on another; there are some colours he can never reconcile, and hence it follows that each painter has his own particular palette, his own peculiar style of painting. What is the special art of each painter? It is to soften down discordant colours by certain sacrifices and to avoid skilfully certain difficulties. I defy the boldest painter to hang the sun or moon in the middle of a picture without dimming its lustre by vapours or clouds; I defy him to choose a sky strewn with stars such as nature presents on a clear night. There must be a certain skill in the choice of subjects and colours, and even then the most harmonious picture is a tissue of falsehoods which conceal each other.

* * * * *

. . . I see a high mountain covered with a gloomy, ancient, and extensive forest. I see a bright torrent

rushing down from it ; I hear the roar of the waters as they dash against the steep rocks. The sun is setting, and its rays turn the drops of water dripping from the rocks into sparkling diamonds. Further on, the waters having overcome all the obstacles that hindered them, are gathered into a broad and deep channel, which leads them at last to a mill, where under the weight of great millstones the common food of man is ground. I can see the mill, I can see the white foam on the revolving wheels, and between the willows I catch sight of the miller's cottage, and fall into a fit of musing. No doubt this forest, which takes me back to primeval times, is worthy of admiration ; no doubt this rock, the symbol of that which is faithful and enduring, these drops of water that sparkle like liquid diamonds in the sun's rays, this roaring torrent which breaks the solemn silence and solitude of the mountain and inspires me with trembling awe, all these are beautiful and worthy of admiration.

But is not my pleasure increased by the sight of these willows, this cottage, these animals pasturing near it, these signs of ordinary labour and useful life ? And how much more pleasure the philosopher derives from all these sights than an ordinary spectator. For he sees with his mind's eye the forest tree transformed into a ship's mast, which must bear its head proudly against the gale ; he sees the rugged ore in the depths of the

mountain fused in ardent furnaces and changed into the tools which make the earth fertile, or into the weapons which destroy its inhabitants ; he sees in the rocks the stones which are to build up the palaces of kings and the temples of the gods ; and in the waters of the torrent he will see the fertility or the ravages it produces, the streams swelling into a river which unites different countries and carries their product from shore to shore, and thus disperses it through a Continent ; and the soft emotion of pleasure in his sensitive mind will be succeeded by the emotion of terror as he further pictures to himself the river lost in the vast and tumultuous ocean.

It is thus that imagination, and all that we know and feel, increases our pleasure ; for neither Nature nor Art, which copies Nature, has any message for the man who is stupid and incapable of emotion, and they can say but little to an ignorant man. What, then, is good taste ?

It is the power, acquired, after repeated experience, to seize whatever is true or good, with that outward garb which renders it beautiful, and to be readily and vividly impressed by it. If we remember those past experiences which influence our present judgment our taste will be cultivated ; if we forget *those* experiences and only retain the impressions resulting from them, we shall have tact and instinct.

Michael Angelo gave the most beautiful possible form to St. Peter's dome. The geometer, De la Hire, struck by this form, calculates its mathematical value, and finds that this is the curve of greatest resistance. Who inspired Michael Angelo to choose this curve out of all the possible curves which were at his disposal? The experience of daily life. This it is which suggests to a master builder as certainly as to the sublime Ruler the angle of a buttress; this it is which has taught him to turn the sails of the windmill to the angle where rotation will be easiest; this it is which makes him grasp in his subtle calculations principles which the geometry of the Academy cannot lay hold of. There must be practical experience and study—these are the first things necessary for the artist and critic. Besides this, I consider that emotion is necessary. But just as one sees men practising justice, benevolence, virtue, because they rightly consider it their best policy, or because they love order and just dealing, and never taste the supreme pleasure of doing what is right, so there may be men of cultivated taste without sensibility, as there may be those who have sensibility without taste. Sensibility, when it is extreme, has no power of discrimination, everything affects it vaguely. One man will tell you coldly, "That is beautiful," and another man will be enthusiastic, transported with emotion.

"Etiam stillabit amicis
Ex oculis rorem; saliet, tundet pede terram."*
"Horace de Arte Poet," 430, 431.

His voice will falter, he will try in vain to stammer out an expression of his feelings.

The latter is certainly the happier; but whether he is the better judge that is quite another matter. Men of colder nature, stern and tranquil observers of nature, often understand better which are the delicate strings they must cause to vibrate—they produce enthusiasts without being enthusiastic themselves. Reason sometimes corrects the rapid impressions of feeling, and appeals from its judgments. This is why some productions are forgotten almost as soon as they have been received with applause, while others which were originally unnoticed or despised gain a different verdict, when time and progress in art and knowledge form a higher and better qualified tribunal.

Hence it is always doubtful if a work of genius will be successful, for it stands alone and can only be truly judged by comparison with nature. And who is able to form such a lofty judgment? Only another man of genius.

* From friendly eyes he will distil the dew; he will leap and strike the earth with his foot.

AN ESSAY ON SCULPTURE

I like fanatics—not those, indeed, who take up some absurd forms of belief and then put a dagger to your throat and shout, “Sign or die,” but those who, taking up some innocent opinion strongly, see nothing to be compared to it, and defend it with all their powers. They go forth into houses and streets, not with lance in rest, but with syllogism, and call on all who pass and who stand to hear, to agree with their nonsense, or acknowledge that Dulcinea is superior in charms to all other ladies in the world. They are droll creatures; they amuse me, sometimes they astonish me. If, perchance, they stumble on a truth they set it forth with an energy which carries all before it. And when they sustain a paradox they support it with such wealth of imagination, with so much eloquence, and with such an abundance of figurative language, they appeal to the intellect and the feelings in so many different ways that the sight of their efforts must impress me.

Such a man is J. Jacques Rousseau when he rages against literature which he has cultivated all his life,

or against the philosophy he has professed, or against the corrupt society of cities, though he longs to live in them, and though he could not bear to be ignored or passed over or forgotten in them. It is in vain that he blocks up the window of his hermitage, which looks towards the capital, it is the only spot in the world that he really sees. He lives not in the depth of the forest, but in Paris.

, Such a man also is Winckelmann when he compares the works of ancient artists with those of modern artists. What does he not see in that mutilated figure of a man which is called a *torso* ! The swelling muscles of the breast are like nothing less than the undulating waves of the sea. Those broad-bent shoulders are like a great arched vault which cannot be broken, but which is, on the contrary, strengthened by the burdens laid on it. And look at those nerves ; the cords which the ancient artists employed to cast great pieces of rock to an immense distance are but spiders' threads compared to these. Ask this charming enthusiast how it came to pass that Glycon, Phidias, and others were able to produce such beautiful and perfect works of art, and he will answer : " It was the love of liberty, which exalts the mind and inspires it with great ideas ; it was the national recognition and reward of their work ; the constant sight and study and imitation of the beauty of nature, the thought of posterity, the intense desire

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for immortality, together with persevering work, a favourable climate, noble manners, and natural talent."

We should not dare to dispute any one of these reasons. But ask him a second question : Is it better to study the antique or to study that nature without which the artists of old, in spite of all the advantages they enjoyed, would never have given us anything worth having, or above mediocrity ?

"The antique," he will answer you without a moment's hesitation, "the antique." And, lo and behold ! there is your enthusiast, though a man of taste and talent, in the darkness of night in his Toboso, or land of dreams. He who despises the antique and prefers nature, runs the risk of being always petty, feeble, and mean in drawing and in style, in drapery and in expression. And he who neglects nature in order to study the antique, runs the risk of being cold and lifeless, and ignorant of those hidden and secret verities which nature reserves for herself. It seems to me that the antique should be studied to teach us to observe nature.

Modern artists have rebelled against the study of the antique because it has been preached to them by amateurs ; and modern writers have supported the study of the antique because it has been attacked by the philosophers.

It seems to me that sculptors cling more to the

antique than painters. Is this because the ancients have left us a few fine statues, while we only know their pictures by the witness and description of writers? There is a great difference between the most glowing description in Pliny and the "Gladiator" of Agasias.

It seems to me that it is harder to judge sculpture than painting, and this opinion of mine, if it is true, should make me the more careful. Hardly any one but an artist can discriminate in sculpture what is fine from what is ordinary. If the "Dying Athlete" touches you, and, perchance, appeals to your feelings so strongly that you can hardly bear to look at it, or, when you look, to take your eyes away from it; and if, then, you have to choose between it and the Gladiator, which in spite of its grandeur and truth of action does not personally appeal to you, and if you prefer the former to the latter work of art, Pigelle and Falconet would laugh at you. It is so difficult for one who is not an artist to judge of a great white statue where there is so little to help one to compare the work of art with nature. Painting reminds me in a hundred different ways of what I have seen and see around me. But it is not thus with sculpture. I should dare to buy a picture, trusting to my own taste and judgment, but if I were choosing a statue I should consult an artist.

You will say, then, that I assert that sculpture is more difficult than painting. I don't say that; for it

is one thing to judge and another to make. Here is a block of marble, the statue is there; you must get it out. Here is a piece of canvas, it is a smooth surface; it is on this you must create; you must make your figures stand out in bold relief; I, or at least my eyes, must be able to walk round them. There must be life, whether it is painting or sculpture, and in sculpture there are not the same resources as in painting; and yet these manifold resources of painting are not so easy to manage. It is enough for the sculptor if he can draw and give expression, and is skilful in using his chisel; he may then venture to produce a nude figure. But painting requires other things besides; and it seems to me that in the production of a composition the artist has more difficulties to contend with than the sculptor. The art of grouping and the art of draping are the same; but what of the disposition of lines and of light and shade, the background, the skies and trees and water, all the accessories of colour and its contrasts? *Sed nostrum non est tantas componere litas.*

Sculpture is for the blind as well as for those who can see. Painting appeals only to the eyes. On the other hand, sculpture is more restricted in its choice of subjects. You may paint anything you like, but sculpture is grave, chaste, and severe, and must choose, though it is true that sculpture is sometimes playful round an urn or a vase. And even in the most sublime

and pathetic compositions you may see a bas-relief of children gambolling round a basin which is to receive human blood. Yet there is something dignified in the attitude of the children. Sculpture is serious even when she appears playful. No doubt she exaggerates and is obliged to exaggerate more than painting. The artist and the sculptor are two poets, but sculpture is incompatible with buffoonery, with the burlesque, or mere prettiness, and can rarely be comic. Marble does not laugh. And yet she may have the mad gaiety of fauns and sylvan beings, and will aid the satyrs to replace old Silenus on his steed, or support the faltering steps of his disciples. Sculpture is voluptuous, but never vile. Even in her voluptuous moments there is a refinement, a choiceness, an exquisiteness which tell me that the art is long and arduous, and that if the brush may dare to put on canvas every fleeting thought, which a moment can suffice to create or destroy, it is not so with the chisel, which must reproduce the artist's ideal in a hard, and rebellious, and enduring material, and which must, therefore, choose carefully and seriously an original and worthy subject.

The pencil is freer to choose than the brush, and the brush than the chisel. Sculpture pre-supposes a deeper and more persistent enthusiasm, a vigorous, yet restrained passion, a hidden and secret fire lurking within the artist's soul. The muse, though silent and hidden,

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first, because they make fine subjects for great pictures and tragedies; and, secondly, because it is the same energy which is at the root both of noble and sublime actions, and also of great crimes. If one man were not capable of setting fire to a town, another man would not be capable of leaping into a chasm to save it. If we could not have had a Cæsar neither could we have had a Cato. A man is born a citizen of Tenarus * or a citizen of heaven, a hero or a criminal, a Marcus Aurelius or a Borgia; *diversis studiis ovo prognatus eodem.*†

THREE SKETCHES BY GREUZE

A sketch is generally more spirited than a picture. It is the artist's work when he is full of inspiration and ardour, when reflection has toned down nothing, it is the artist's soul expressing itself freely on the canvas. His pen or skilful pencil seems to sport and play; a few strokes express the rapid fancy, and the more vaguely art embodies itself the more room is there for the play of imagination. In singing, we must listen to the words of a song; but I can put any feelings I please into a well-composed symphony, and as I know better than any one else what touches my heart, I am

* As we should say of hell.

† "Of different dispositions, though born from the same egg."
Referring to Castor and Pollux.

generally more affected by my own interpretation of the music according to the mood I am in, whether grave, or tender, or gay, than I should be by the interpretation of any one else. There is the same sort of difference between a sketch and a picture; in the latter, the subject is fully worked out for us to look at; in the former, I can imagine so many things which are only suggested.

The composition of *The Beloved Mother* is so natural and simple that the careless observer might think that he could have done as well himself, and that it did not require much thought or cleverness. I will only answer such persons by saying, "Yes, of course you would have grouped all these children around their mother, lavishing their caresses on her, and you would have represented one of them crying because he was not noticed more than the others; and you would, of course, have introduced the husband coming in at the moment, looking cheerful and happy at having such a wife, and proud of being the father of so many children. And, of course, you would have remembered to bring the grandmother into the scene."

Let us describe the composition. It is in the country; in a large, low room we see a bed, in front of the bed a cat sits on a footstool, while the beloved mother is lying back on a couch with all her children round her. There are six at least; the youngest is in

her arms, the second clings to her on one side, and the third on the other ; the fourth has climbed up the back of the couch and is kissing her forehead ; the fifth kisses her cheek ; the sixth, standing up, hangs his head down and looks dissatisfied. The mother's countenance is full of joy and tenderness, yet she seems as if rather overcome by the caresses and presence of such a number of children, which would be too much for her if continued long. It is the attitude and expression of the mother lying with her head a little back, and weakness manifesting itself in spite of happiness and tenderness, that gives its charm and originality to this one figure taken apart from the rest of the composition. In front of this charming group lies a child's bodice and a little cart. Further back in the room sits the grandmother in her armchair near the fireplace ; she has a truly grandmotherly cap and dress, and is smiling at the scene before her. More to the left in the foreground a dog is barking with joy, as if he partook of the general happiness. Further still to the left the husband appears, just come from shooting ; he stretches out his arms and throws his body slightly back as he laughs ; he is a fine, well-grown young man, and is evidently proud and happy at the sight of his group of children ; his dog is at his side ; further back is a basket of linen, and we catch a glimpse of a maid leaving the room.

The picture is excellent as a work of art and as a portrait of what a happy home should be. It preaches this lesson to every sensible man : " Keep your family in comfort, and take care to have a happy home to which to return."

ANOTHER SKETCH : " THE UNGRATEFUL SON "

Imagine a room only lighted by the door when it is open or by a square opening above the door when it is shut. Look round, and the room will reveal to you nothing but poverty. Still there is a well-furnished bed in the right corner ; on the same side in front is a large and comfortable black leather chair ; the father of the ungrateful son is sitting there ; near the door is a low cupboard, and a little table by the old man's side with a bowl of soup. Although the eldest son might have stayed at home to help his old father, he has enlisted, and is now come with an old soldier to ask his family for some money. His father is indignant. He reproaches his son for forgetting his duties to his father and mother, and the unnatural son returns insulting words to these severe reproofs. He stands erect in the centre of the picture, his hat on his head, with an angry, insolent air ; his right arm is raised on the side next his father, and above the head of one of his sisters, and with his hand he makes menacing

gestures. The good old man, who has been a kind but not too indulgent father, tries to stand up, but one of his daughters who is kneeling before him catches hold of his coat-tails to prevent him. The young scoundrel is surrounded by his eldest sister, his mother, and one of his little brothers. His mother puts her arms round him, but he brutally pushes her away and tries to escape from her embrace. The poor mother is overcome with grief; she and the eldest sister try to interpose between the young man and his father and to hide them from each other. The sister has seized her brother's coat as if to say, "Oh, what are you doing; you drive away your mother, and you threaten your father; kneel down rather and ask their pardon." The little brother meanwhile is crying and rubbing his eyes, and, hanging on to his tall brother's arm, tries to drag him from the house. The youngest of all stands behind the father's chair, looking puzzled and frightened. At the other side of the picture the old soldier who had enlisted and accompanied the young man walks away with his head down and his sword under his arm, and his back to the scene. I forgot to say that a dog in the foreground adds to the tumult by barking.

Everything is clearly thought out and well grouped in this sketch; the grief of the mother and her tenderness for a spoiled child, the old man's indignation, the different actions of the sisters and of the little children,

the insolence of the youth, and the old soldier's feeling of shame, as he shrugs his shoulders and goes off, are all well depicted ; and the barking dog is one of those minor accessories which Greuze knows how to invent. Yet this sketch, though very fine, does not please me as much as the following :—

“THE BAD SON'S PUNISHMENT”

He has been to the wars, he comes back, but at what a moment ! His father has just died. Everything is much changed in the old home. There was poverty before ; now there is grief and want. There is no mattress on the bed where the old man is laid out. The light falls from an opening, but only on his face, the rest is in shadow. At his feet on a straw chair is a burning taper and a vase of holy water. The eldest daughter lies back in the old leather chair in an attitude of despair, one hand resting on her forehead, the other raised and still holding the crucifix which she gave her dying father to kiss. One of the little children has hidden its face on her bosom. The other, with hands and arms stretched out, seems to gather its first impressions of death. The younger sister, sitting between the window and the bed, cannot realize that she has no longer a father ; she bends towards him, she seems trying to meet his last looks ;

she raises her arm, and her half-open mouth exclaims, "My father, my father, don't you hear me any more?" The poor mother stands against the wall near the door; her knees give way under her, she is overcome with grief. This is the sight which meets the eyes of the ungrateful son. He comes forward, he is on the threshold; he has lost the leg with which he spurned his mother, the arm which he raised against his father is maimed. His mother meets him at his entrance; she is silent, but with her hand points to the corpse as if to say: "See what you have done."

The ungrateful son is struck with amazement; his head falls forward and he strikes his forehead with his hand. What a lesson is here depicted for fathers and children! The minor details are as carefully thought out as the principal figure. I can imagine from the book lying on the table before the eldest daughter that it was her sad task to read the prayers for the dying, while the phial by the book probably contained a cordial. The same dog appears as in the other sketch, and he seems doubtful whether he is to recognize this maimed fellow as a son of the house or to take him for a beggar.

I do not know what effect this short and simple description of the sketch will produce on others, but for my own part I could not write it without emotion. But as no one makes anything quite perfect, even in

these beautiful sketches I find something to criticize ; first, I think that the mother's gesture is not quite natural at the moment. Would she not have covered her eyes with one hand as if to hide from her sight both her son and her husband's corpse, while she pointed to the latter with her other hand ? It seems to me that this gesture would have added to the pathos, and the lower part of the face would have sufficiently shown the violence of her grief. Secondly, I think that in one trifling detail Greuze has gone wrong, though he is usually very particular ; the vessel for holy water and the asperser are such as the church would put at the foot of the bier, but in a cottage it would only be a jug of water with a piece of box blessed on Palm Sunday.

For the rest I consider that these sketches are masterpieces of composition ; there is nothing laboured or artificial about them, but the interest is simple and striking, yet appeals to all. But nowadays there is so little real feeling for art that perhaps these sketches will never be painted as pictures, and if they were, Boucher would sooner sell fifty of his commonplace indecent puppets than Greuze these two sublime compositions. But now with regard to Greuze's style, let me ask you a few questions. First, what is true poetry ? Secondly, is there poetry in these two last sketches by Greuze ? Thirdly, what difference is there between this poetry and that of the sketch of "The Tomb of

Artemisia?" Fourthly, of two painted cupolas, of which one would be recognized as painted, and the other would be mistaken for a real cupola, which is the finer work of art? And lastly, of two letters written, we will say, from a mother to a daughter—the one full of fine sentiments, eloquent and pathetic, which every one admires but which no one would take for a real letter, the other so simple and natural that every one takes it for a letter really written by a mother to a daughter—tell me which is the one we ought to admire, and also which was the more difficult to write? You may be certain that I shall not go further with these questions and answers, for it would lead me to writing a book within a book.

ON DIDEROT'S OWN PORTRAIT PAINTED BY MICHEL VAN-LOO

I LIKE Michel, but I like truth better. The portrait is tolerably like, to those who would not recognize the original, it might say, as the gardener said in the comic opera, "You never saw me without a wig before." Here is Diderot, gentleness and vivacity, but he is too young, too small, he is painted more like a pretty woman, smiling and looking archly, with prettily curved lips. There is not the noble tone of colour which we see in the Cardinal de Choiseul, and, besides, the dress is much too rich for a poor scribbler, who would be heavily taxed if he wore such a fine dressing-gown. He is taken full face, with his head bare; his daintily arranged grey pigtail makes him look as if he were putting on the airs of an old coquette instead of being a philosopher. A false note has been struck at the beginning; it must have been the fault of that foolish Madame Van-Loo who came chattering to him

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while he sat for his picture ; this has given him quite another look, and spoilt all. He ought to have been left alone to fall into a reverie ; then his lips would have been slightly parted, his eyes would have looked afar, and his mental vision would have given expression to his countenance, and then Michel would have produced a fine portrait. The pretty philosopher presented here will indeed be ever a token to me of the friendship of the artist, an excellent artist and a still more excellent man. But what will my grandchildren say when they compare my melancholy looks with that smiling, effeminate old coxcomb ? My children, I must warn you beforehand, it is not me. I had a hundred different countenances during the day according to my states of feeling. I was calm, sad, dreamy, tender, violent, passionate, enthusiastic, but never like that portrait you see. I had a broad forehead, very intelligent eyes, rather large features, a head like that of an ancient orator, a good nature which bordered on old-fashioned rusticity and stupidity. My face is one which puzzles an artist. It may be that there are too many things mingled in it, or that too many thoughts pass rapidly through my mind and express themselves on my countenance, and thus the painter finds that I am not the same from one moment to another, and his task is a more difficult one than he expected. I have never been well painted except by a poor wretch called

Gavant, who caught me, just as a fool may say a clever thing. He who sees my portrait by Gavant sees the true man ; *Ecco il vero Pulcinello*. M. Grimm has had it engraved, but he does not give it to any one ; he is still waiting for an inscription, which he will only get when I have written something to immortalize myself. And how soon will he have it ? When ?—perhaps tomorrow. Who knows what I am capable of doing ? I do not feel as if I had used more than half my powers ; until now I have only trifled. I forgot to say that there is a good bust of me by Mademoiselle Collot ; it belongs to my friend M. Grimm. It is good, very good ; she has put it in the place of another which her master, M. Falconet, had made, which was not good. When Falconet saw the bust by his pupil, he took a hammer and broke his before her ; that was frank and courageous. As the bust fell in pieces under the artist's blows there appeared a fine pair of ears under the stupid wig which Madame Geoffrin had insisted on my wearing at the last moment. M. Grimm had never been able to forgive Madame Geoffrin for that wig ; now, thank Heaven, they are reconciled, and this Falconet, who cared so little for his future reputation, and disdained immortality, and despised posterity, is spared the trouble of leaving it an unworthy bust. Yet I must own that this unworthy bust contrived to show the traces of a secret grief which consumed me

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while I sat for it. How is it that an artist may fail to transmit, faithfully, the features before his eyes, and yet convey to his canvas or his clay secret feelings and thoughts hidden in the depths of the soul, and which were quite unknown to him?

A SCENE FROM THE LIFE OF ST. GREGORY

(*By Charles Van-Loo*)

THERE are two figures in this picture : the saint who is dictating his homilies, and the secretary who is writing them down. St. Gregory sits with his elbow leaning on a table ; he wears his surplice and rochet, and his head is covered with a Churchman's cap. What a fine head ! We scarcely know which to admire most, the noble figure of the saint, or the natural, easy attitude of the secretary ; our eyes turn from one to the other with equal pleasure. The composition of this picture is sublime ; there is so much truth of nature in this quiet room, where a soft, subdued light steals in, in perfect harmony with the scene. But, tell me how that brute, Van-Loo, managed to compose such a picture, for he was a brute. He could neither think, nor talk, nor read, nor write. I mistrust those clever people who have something sparkling to say on every occasion. They have not got the *demon*. They are neither sad

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Raphael, Domenichino, and Poussin. Among the others who are, so to say, of their school, a few have shown distinctive gifts, for instance, Le Sueur and Rubens ; and though you may detect a piece of bad drawing here and there, in a hand or the setting of a head, when you know their works they haunt you and disgust you with lesser productions.

A RUSSIAN PASTORAL

THIS is by the same painter as the last, but he seems more at home in this simple subject; there is a twilight effect, a repose, a peace and innocence about it which charm me. An old man has been playing the guitar, but he has left off playing to listen to a young shepherd piping. The old man is sitting under a tree, and a young girl is near him; I think he is blind—at least, he ought to be. The youth is sitting at a little distance, his shepherd's pipe in his mouth; there is a charming simplicity in his dress and appearance; he has a fine head. The old man and the girl are listening attentively. On the right are some rocks, and at the foot of them the sheep are feeding. This picture goes straight to my heart; I should like to lean against that tree between the old man and the girl and listen while the youth played. And when he had left off playing I would go and sit by him, and a little later we would all lead the good old man to his cottage. A picture that affects one thus cannot be a bad picture. You may say that it is feeble in colour and

monotonous in tone—it may be so, but it touches the heart, it arrests the attention ; and what is the use of all your correct drawing and pure tints, and skill in light and shade, if your subject leaves me cold and unaffected. Painting is the art of reaching the soul through the eyes, but if the picture appeals to the eyes and never reaches the soul, the painter has fallen far short of his aim.

A HALT OF PEASANTS IN THE SUMMER

IN this picture we have a forest and a stream, some cattle and carts, and groups of men and women. They are harmoniously arranged, but the picture can only be interesting to a native who is living seven or eight hundred leagues from his own country, and who, looking at this picture, is transported to the home of his childhood, to his father and mother, his wife and friends.

Just so, my dear Grimm; if I were at Moscow I should delight in looking at a map of Paris. I should say, There is the Rue du Luxembourg; my friend lives there, and perhaps he is thinking of me now; he regrets my absence, yet wishes me to be as happy as I can be far from him. Here again is the Rue des Petit-Champs; how often we have breakfasted together in that little house. There abode mirth and playfulness, trust and friendship, esteem and kindliness, and freedom. Our amiable hostess had promised her Genevese Æsculapius to go to bed at ten o'clock, and

lo! we were chatting and laughing at midnight. There is the Rue Royale, where meet the best and ablest men of the capital; in order to gain admittance there it is not enough to be titled or learned, a man must also be good. There you will meet trusty friends, and there all kinds of subjects will be discussed—history, politics, philosophy, finance, and literature, There we respect each other enough to dare to contradict. There you will find the true cosmopolitan, the man who knows how to spend his life profitably, who is a good father, a good friend, a good husband. It is there that every foreigner of some reputation and merit may be sure of being welcomed with cordiality and politeness. And that dear naughty Baroness d'Holbach, is she still alive, and does she still make fun of many of her guests, who love her none the less for her jests at their expense? There, too, I would mark the Rue des Vieux Augustins. Ah, there, my friend, words would fail me! I could only bow my head on my hands while tears fell from my eyes, while I murmured to myself: *She is there*, and how comes it that *I am so far away?*

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR'S LANDING IN ENGLAND

(By *L'Epicié*)

A GENERAL could not choose a more forcible way of telling his soldiers that they must conquer or die than by burning the vessels which had brought them to the enemy's shores. This is what William of Normandy did, and it is a striking subject for a picture for any painter except *l'Epicié*. For what has he done? Of course he has chosen the impressive moment when the ships have been set on fire, and William is addressing his troops and inflaming their ardour. The soldiers will be full of excitement; you will see all kinds of emotions depicted in their faces, surprise, admiration, uneasiness, fear, dismay, joy. You will see groups of officers surrounding the principal figure of the Duke, and the tumult of a great army will reach your ears.

Alas! there is nothing of this sort in the picture; you need not fear to have your pulses excited, there is nothing in this composition to stir your blood. A little smoke rises in one corner, and a few idle soldiers

are standing about as if nothing remarkable were happening. William is on horseback in the midst of his army ; he advances from right to left, but there is no excitement, no sound of trumpets, no enthusiasm ; the march is more dull and commonplace than the entry of a regiment to garrison a country town.

Yet how easily the whole aspect of the picture might be changed ; let the vessels be seen burning, make William harangue his troops, and put some life and expression into the figures around. The masses are good, and the grouping is well done, but there is nothing to arrest the attention. If I had the talent of Le Sueur, of Rubens, of Carraccio, or of any great painter, I could explain how the artist might have given interest to the moment he chose for his picture, but I have not the power to do this. I can only suggest that when the artist does not choose the most striking moment to paint, he should replace the interest of a strong action by the sublime treatment of a calmer moment, which may thus be made far more impressive than a moment of action. Call to mind "The Deluge," by Poussin, where there are only three or four figures. It needs a great artist to express so much with like simplicity ; and when the artist has done his part it needs a refined public to appreciate such an effect. If we turn to the stage, it is not in scenes of passion that the great actor shows his skill

most. It is easy to storm, to pour out abuse, and to be in a violent rage, but to say quietly and naturally "Take a seat, Cinna," that is a part which it is difficult to play well. It is in moments of restrained passion, when the volcano, as it were, seethes just before an explosion, it is then that I know an actor's powers, and realize what he can do, for it is then that he displays his intelligence and judgment. And, in like manner, it is when a painter can give sublimity to some quiet scene, when he can set aside violent action, and represent great characters in repose, that I set him above those who can only depict strong passions. In this picture of L'Epicié there is no sublime effect to replace the want of action; he has neither harmony nor grandeur; he is dry, hard, and crude.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST BY ST. JOHN

WHAT a hurry some people are in to finish their pictures and to get paid! Alas for the works of an artist who counts the hours and looks forward to his money! Here are three apostles on the right, looking frightened because they have heard a voice; but what was there to frighten them in the words, "This is My beloved Son"? St. John raises his eyes to heaven and pours water on the head of Christ, without looking at what he is doing. And why is he standing on a block of quarried stone? Who brought it there? Would not a natural boulder of rock have done just as well, and have been more picturesque? For what does a mason do when he chisels a rock? He takes away all its natural physiognomy. It is a symbol of the education which civilizes us, delivers us from our wild and uncouth state, and makes us more agreeable members of society, but less interesting as subjects for a poem or a picture. And is that soft white garment a

sheepskin? Oh, it may be so, as you say, but a sheepskin then which has been cleaned, and combed, and bleached; not the least like the clothing of a dweller among mountains and forests. And why give us this emaciated figure of Christ? Can we not rise above this traditional form? Have we not two very different figures of Christ presented to us in the Gospels—the Christ on the Cross and the Christ who teaches His Apostles? It seems to me that as sacred pictures are hung in churches in order to teach the common folk and make them acquainted with the heroes and events of their religion, it should not be a matter of indifference whether the pictures are good or bad. I hold the painter of religious pictures to be a kind of preacher more striking and clearer and more easily understood than the vicar or his curate. The latter speak to the ears of the people, which are often deaf; the picture speaks to the eyes just after the manner of Nature, who teaches us almost everything we know. I will go further, and say that all iconoclasts and despisers of processions and images and all the apparatus of visible worship are so many hired bravos in the service of philosophers who are weary of superstition, but with this difference, that the hired servants are more dangerous than their masters. If you suppress all the outward symbols of religion, if you suppress all pictures and images, the result will be that

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in a short time people will have no religious ideas in common, and will be ready to kill each other about the simplest articles of faith. Those stern reformers do not realize the effect of outward ceremonies on the common folk; they cannot have seen the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday, nor watched the enthusiasm of the people in the procession on Corpus Christi day, an enthusiasm which takes hold even of me sometimes. I can never behold unmoved that long procession of clergy in their priestly vestments, and of acolytes in their white robes, girt with blue sashes, scattering flowers before the Blessed Sacrament. The multitude go before and after in reverent silence; the bystanders bow low as the procession passes. I can never hear the solemn chant of the priests, which is answered by the many voices of men and women, young girls and children, without being profoundly affected, without its bringing tears to my eyes and sending a thrill through my whole being; there is something in it so grand, so pathetic and melancholy. I knew a Protestant artist who had spent many years in Rome, and he confessed to me that he never saw the Sovereign Pontiff perform Mass in St. Peter's in the midst of the cardinals and clergy without becoming a Catholic for the time being—he took up his Protestant faith again at the door!

*does not thus
reflect the consideration
which I would readily
entice.*

ST. AUGUSTINE WRITING HIS CONFESSIONS

(By Monnet)

I ONLY mention this picture to show how many mistakes can be made on a few feet of canvas. The saint in the picture is looking towards heaven, but does not one rather look down into one's own heart while examining the errors of our past life? This man Monnet has evidently never examined his own conscience. Again, a man does not write while looking up to heaven, and yet this saint is represented as writing; and when one writes the pen is not usually held up in the air, because then the ink would run the wrong way and go up the pen instead of on the paper. There is also a cross-looking angel for a desk. He is of wood, and wooden angels have no business to look cross.

ANDROMACHE

(By Doyen)

THE scene Doyen has presented to us here is Andromache weeping in the presence of Ulysses, who has commanded her sons to be snatched from her arms and thrown down from the walls of Troy. The moment chosen by the painter is when Ulysses points with his hand to a high tower, while the child is being torn from its mother's arms. On the right is a troop of soldiers; Ulysses stands in front of them pointing to the tower.

The composition is interrupted here, and a blank space is left in the middle of the picture. Beyond this space, on the left, a very beautiful figure is seen at the corner of Hector's tomb; it is one of Andromache's maidens kneeling. Her arms are raised to heaven, her hands are clasped, and her long hair is falling over her face.

Next to her is the soldier who has seized Astyanax and holds him in his arms; the child bends forward

and turns towards its mother. Andromache has thrown herself at the feet of the soldier in the attitude of supplication, and does not attempt to rescue her child. Her arms are stretched out, her head is raised, while the body is bent. Her dress, her expression, and her attitude are noble and pathetic. Behind Andromache stands a soldier, who hinders one of her attendants from drawing near the mother and child; the girl tears her hair and throws herself on another attendant, whose arms are uplifted in gestures of despair. All this part of the scene, which is vigorously conceived, passes before the tomb of Hector, which forms a grand and noble background. A soldier stoops over the side of the tomb to see that nothing else is concealed there.* The grief of the attendant maidens is well depicted, and their gestures and grouping are characteristic. The figure of the soldier keeping them back is also very well designed.

I have said that the artist has succeeded in painting a noble and striking Andromache; but is it likely that she would throw herself at the feet of the soldier who is, after all, only the instrument of his general's commands? What can the soldier do if Ulysses remain inflexible? I can imagine her lingering near her child; but if she appeal, let it be to Ulysses, let her

* Andromache hid her only son Astyanax in Hector's tomb, and it was there Ulysses discovered him.

grief, her despair, her tears be poured out to him. Now, this is just what she does not, what she cannot do, for she cannot see him ; this awkwardly placed soldier stands in the way. And why is this wide blank space left between Ulysses and the other actors in the scene ? Why is he so entirely separated from them ? The composition is thus cut in two, and would make two separate pictures, one of which we should keep and value, and the other we should throw into the fire as utterly worthless. That stiff, straight, cold and characterless Ulysses is surely made of basket-work ; and why is there a row of copper-complexioned, cabbage-headed soldiers ? What do they mean or do ? Are they put in to fill up a space ? They certainly do their duty exactly, if they were meant for that. If Doyen had shown his sketch to any man of sense he would have advised him to give these soldiers more individuality, to put some life into their limbs, and expression into their faces, to make them take their part in the scene. There should also be a little space between them and their general, it would be more seemly, for they should be waiting on him, not treading on his heels.

Give me, then, another Ulysses instead of this lath-and-plaster fellow. If you are not yet familiar with that eloquent, imperious, and crafty rascal, read Homer and Virgil, and store your mind with the ideas

of those great poets till your imagination kindles and enables you to reproduce the true aspect of the man. Let the figure of Ulysses take a few steps forward, so as to lessen the blank space which cuts your picture in two. There must be but one scene, and when Ulysses is placed nearer to Andromache she can address her prayer to him and he will be able to hear her. Let the soldier who is seizing the child retire into the background that he may not come between the mother and him she supplicates. Leave Andromache in her present attitude, bowed to the ground, but let her grasp her child or the soldier, whichever you prefer, with one hand only, while her other arm, her head, the rest of her body, and all her gestures are directed to Ulysses, as will be natural when the soldier is in the background. Again, Astyanax is wooden; let him stretch out both his little arms to his mother, as partaking in her grief. Your composition, when these changes have been made, will be strong and pervaded by one idea and feeling. Pay no attention to those stupid people who are surprised that the attendants seem to be in greater affliction than the mother. Every one must manifest his feelings in the way suitable to his rank and character. Tell those stupid people to read the passage where the poet describes a king giving his daughter up to the stroke of the priest's knife—

" Could I but find in bitter tears relief,
 And give full current to a father's grief!
 Sad destiny of kings—still slaves to be,
 From shocks of fate and venom'd tongues ne'er free;
 And staring eyes our saddest hours oppress,
 Who grieve the more must show their grief the less."

Andromache is a mother, true, but she is also a king's daughter, and a princess, the widow of Hector. As long as her son is alive before her eyes she still cherishes hope. Her maidens can give no succour and they know this; all they can do is to join in a chorus of grief while their mistress bends in supplication. Besides, they realize, far more than Andromache does, that they will never see again the darling child they have nursed.

It is late; good-bye, M. Doyen, good night. *Au revoir* till the next *Salon*.

AN EVENING WALK

. . . WHILE we were thus discoursing we reached the shore of the lake at the spot where we had left our little companions. The evening was drawing on, and we still had some way to go to return to the castle; as we climbed the hill the Abbé made one of his pupils recite the two fables he had learnt, and the other translated a passage in Virgil, while I thought over the scenes I had gazed at, and meditated how I should describe them to you. My task was over sooner than that of the Abbé, and as I listened to these lines—

“ Vere novo, gelidus canis cum montibus humor,
Liquitur, et zephyro putris se gleba resolvit,” *

I fell into musing over the different charms of poetry and painting, and of the difficulty of transcribing the beauties of poetry from one language into another; whereupon I told the Abbé the following fable. Once upon a time Jupiter was seized with violent pains in his head; he sat groaning with his head bent on his

* “In the early spring, when the cold hoar frost thaws on the mountains, and the ploughed land grows soft under the west wind.”

hands during many days and nights, while gods and men watched round him in silence. Suddenly he raised himself, gave a loud cry, and out of his head sprang a goddess clothed and in full armour. It was Minerva. While the gods on Mount Olympus were celebrating the delivery of Jupiter and the birth of Minerva, men below were admiring her beauty. On this point they were all agreed, but they all differed in their opinions as to her dress. The savage would have made her doff her helmet and armour and go about with only a girdle of twisted grass. The dwellers in the Archipelago desired that she should go entirely naked, but the inhabitants of Ausonia wished her to be decently attired; while the Asiatics suggested that a long flowing tunic falling softly over her limbs down to her feet would be the most graceful attire. The kind and indulgent Jupiter allowed his daughter to try these various costumes, and mortals then were forced to admit that no dress was so becoming to Minerva as that she wore when she sprang from her father's head.

The Abbé easily grasped the meaning of my fable. We had ourselves experienced how hard it is to translate the ancient poets, and we agreed that it was far easier to translate a prose writer such as Tacitus than the poet Virgil.

* * * * *

If the Abbé was not exactly the companion of my

choice, at least I preferred his company to being alone. When I cannot share my pleasure with another it loses half its charm. When I read or reflect, or write or hear, or see or meditate, it is for my friends as well as for myself, and when they are absent I treasure up everything for them. I am always thinking of their happiness and how to promote it. If I admire a fine passage in poetry I must show it to them; if I come across some noble trait of character I must acquaint them with it. If I see some beautiful sight I begin mentally to describe it to them. It is to my friends that I devote the employment of all my senses and faculties; perhaps that is why I cannot help some exaggeration in my talk, and my imagination decks out everything for their benefit. Ungrateful creatures, they sometimes reproach me with this as a fault.

The Abbé, according to his wont, was enthusiastically admiring the beauties of nature. He repeated the word *beautiful* a hundred times, applying it to all kinds of different objects.

“L’Abbé,” said I, “you call this precipitous rock beautiful, and the forest on the brow above you also call beautiful, as likewise the foaming torrent spreading its white bubbles on the gravelly shore; you apply the same epithet to man, animals, plants, stones, metals, fishes, and birds. And yet you must own that you are not speaking of any physical quality which is common

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to them all. Then how can you apply the same adjective to each one alike ? ”

“ I really don't know ; I never thought about it before.”

“ My dear sir,” I said, “ this common praise is given by you because all these objects, with such different physical attributes, excite some common feeling in your mind.”

“ Yes, I understand, admiration.”

“ Add pleasure, for if you examine the matter closely you will find that objects which excite astonishment or admiration without giving pleasure are not beautiful ; and that those which please and yet do not excite surprise or admiration are not beautiful either. You would be horrified if you saw Paris in flames ; after the lapse of time you would like to walk among the ashes. It would cause you profound grief to see your friend die ; after some time you would feel a melancholy pleasure in visiting her grave and sitting beside it. Our sensations are often composite ; and that is why the only objects we call beautiful are those we can hear or see. If you drive away from sounds all the thoughts and feelings associated with them you deprive them of beauty. If the sight of an object merely impresses the eye without appealing to your reason or your feelings it will not appear beautiful. There is also another difference to be noted ; that is

between the object itself in nature and its reproduction or imitation by art. In a terrible fire where all are perishing, fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, friends, strangers, and fellow-citizens, you are filled with horror, your first impulse is to fly from the spot, you turn away your eyes, you close your ears to the screams of distress, or else you plunge boldly into the flames and try to rescue those you love, and if that is impossible you would perish with them, if need be, in the attempt. But if the same scene is placed before you on canvas you will gaze with pleasure, you will exclaim with Æneas :—

‘En Priamus; sunt hic etiam sua premia laudi.’ *

“And I shall shed tears,” said the Abbé, “no doubt. But why do I shed tears if the sight of the picture gives me pleasure? And how can a pleasurable feeling excite me to tears?”

“Have you really never shed such tears, l’Abbé, that you ask for an explanation? It would take too long to discuss this subject, but read this short sentence in my notebook and perhaps it will suggest an answer to your question.”

The Abbé took the book and read: “‘La Rochefoucauld has said that in the troubles of those dearest to us there is always something which is not wholly

* “Behold Priam; here due reward is paid to merit.”

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displeasing to us.' But does that touch the question?" asked the Abbé.

"Go on reading," I said, and he continued: "Is there not a truer and more satisfactory view of human nature to be found in this saying than we at first imagine? It is noble, it is sweet to pity the unfortunate. Their misfortune gives us a pleasant consciousness of the strength of our emotions. Though we do not own this as frankly to ourselves as a certain surgeon once did when he said to his friend, "I only wish that you would break your leg, that you might see what I would do for you." But however ridiculous such a wish appears, it is common, it is natural, it lies concealed at the bottom of each man's heart. Who would not wish the woman he loved to be exposed to danger in some fire if he were sure of being able to plunge into the flames as Alcibiades did and to carry her off in his arms? On the stage we prefer to see a good man suffering rather than a wicked man punished; while on the contrary in real life we prefer to see the bad man punished rather than the good man suffering. It is a noble spectacle to watch virtue exposed to great trials; we are always ready to side mentally with the suffering hero, and it speaks well for our human nature that the impartial judgment of the heart decides in favour of innocence. There is only one thing that can attract us in the bad man, and that is the grandeur of his views,

the extent of his genius, and the danger of his enterprise; then we forget his wickedness and grow interested in his fortunes; if we join Count Bedmar in a conspiracy against Venice, it is virtue, though under another aspect, which fascinates us. ("Observe, by the way, my dear Abbé, how dangerous an eloquent historian may be.") We go to the theatre in order to rise, undeservedly, in our own estimation, to share in the pride of great deeds which we shall never perform, to be empty shadows of the heroes who live on the stage before us; we are eager to embrace virtue in distress, we are certain that she will triumph on the boards, or at least that we can escape in time; we follow her to the foot of the scaffold, but no further, and no one has laid his head on the block by the side of the Earl of Essex—the pit of the theatre is full, but real scenes of misery we avoid. 'The boxes would all be empty if the spectators were really obliged to follow the fortunes of the victims on the stage. The poet, the painter, the sculptor, and the actor are charlatans who sell us at a cheap rate the valour of Horatius and the patriotism of Cato; they contrive in truth to be the most seductive of flatterers.'"

The Abbé had read as far as this when one of his pupils came running in merrily with his copybook in his hand. The Abbé, who preferred chatting with me to doing his duty—for duty is one of the most

disagreeable things in the world—sent the boy away, and asked me to read the next paragraph.

“Go on reading,” I said, and the Abbé read: “‘He who copies nature will always have some important idea, which dominates his work. I do not say that it will be the result of method, or scheme, or of reflection; but instinct, secret leanings, natural sensibility, or a noble and exquisite taste, will unconsciously be his guide.’”

“When the first and last tragedy of Marmontel’s ‘Denys le Tyrant’ was shown to Voltaire, the old poet exclaimed—

“‘He will never do anything; he has not got the secret.’”

“Do you mean genius?”

“Yes, l’Abbé, genius, and a wise choice of subjects; such as man in a state of nature opposed to civilized man; man oppressed by despotism or under the yoke of domestic oppression; or the miseries of human society, the inevitable laws of fate, the results of strong passions; but remember it is difficult to be strongly moved by sufferings which are never likely to touch us. The less distance there is between me and the character in the piece the more easily am I affected, and the stronger will be my sympathy. It has been said, ‘*Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipse tibi;*’ but you may cry as much as you like and yet not move me to

mingle my tears with yours unless I can fancy myself standing in your place ; I must be able to catch hold of the cord by which you are suspended in mid air or I shall not thrill with your emotion."

" Ah ! now I understand."

" What do you understand, l'Abbé ? "

" I play two parts," said the Abbé ; " I am double ; one self is the actor, and the other self is the *ego*. It is the actor self who trembles and suffers, and it is the other self, the *ego*, who enjoys it."

" Quite right, l'Abbé, and that is where the limit comes to the imitator of nature. If I forget the *ego* too much or too long, the emotion is too powerful ; if I don't forget the *ego* at all, if I am not carried out of myself into the other self, the emotion is too slight ; it is the right medium between these two which makes us shed delicious tears. On one occasion two pictures were exhibited to compete for a prize ; the subject was the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew. The judges remained undecided how to give it, when an old woman expressed her opinion, '*This* picture,' she said, ' pleases me much, but the *other* is very painful to look at.' The first picture left her outside the canvas, the second carried her into the scene itself. We prefer pleasure for ourselves, but we enjoy the reflection of suffering imagined in a picture. If the subject chosen by the painter would interest us in reality, art will add the charm of

imitation to the charm of the thing itself. But if the subject is displeasing to us, the charm of imitation is all that is left to us in the picture, the poem, or the statue. He, therefore, who is careless in the choice of a subject deprives himself of a great advantage; he is like an unskilful magician who breaks his magic rod in two."

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While the Abbé had been amusing himself with talk, the children, on the other hand, had hurried over their tasks and were now spending the time in play; the result was that the essay of one was full of platitudes, while the other showed a translation full of mistakes. The Abbé scolded, and said there should be no walk to-day, and thus the pupils and I, as often happens, were punished for the master's fault, for the pupils bring bad work when the master neglects his part. Being deprived of my "Cicerone" and my excursion, I determined to join the amusements of the rest of the party. I gambled, played badly, was scolded, and lost my money. Then I joined the conversation of the philosophers, who became at last so noisy and so unintelligible that I left them, and, taking up my hat and stick, went for a solitary stroll, meditating on the important and interesting question which they were discussing, and at which they had arrived from a starting-point far away.

The question was the definition of words and how to limit their meaning, without which preliminary it is impossible to make ourselves understood. Take, for example, the word *virtue*: what does *virtue* mean? Each one defined it in his own way, and the discussion changed to a question of morals, some saying that virtue was the habit of obeying the laws, while another said that virtue was to live for the benefit of others.

The former said that the virtue of the legislator or sovereign might be to live for the benefit of others, but that the subject, the citizen, all ordinary folk indeed, have too vague ideas about the public benefit to be able to make it their rule of conduct; for even philosophers dispute on this point. And if the public benefit was the rule, the Vicar of St. Roch, who believes his religion is necessary for the good of society, will kill the philosopher, unless the latter has the first chance of killing the vicar for preaching a religion which he thinks contrary to the public benefit. If every one is to follow his own idea of the public good, the lives of men will be full of crime, and the populace will be driven here and there by passion and error, and will have no morality, for there are no morals where laws, however imperfect, are not held sacred.

Our philosophers might have agreed in their definition of virtue, if the law were always the exponent of the public good; but it is far from being

always this, and it is hard to compel men of sense to obey a law which is manifestly bad, and to force them to give others an example of following it, and to burden their consciences with actions which in their heart and soul they detest. What! Am I, because I live on the coast of Malabar, to murder my child and anoint myself with the fat to make myself invulnerable? . . . Shall I say "the law is bad, and therefore I will not obey it? I would rather die than obey." Socrates might say, "I will protest or die; the law may command, but the law is bad." And Aristippus might answer, "I know as well as you, Socrates, that the law is bad, and I do not value my life overmuch; but yet I submit to the law for fear that, if I begin disputing the authority of bad laws, I may encourage the foolish multitude to dispute the authority of good laws." *

I left this question, but returned to it again and again. "Why is it," I said, "that the most important words which are in our mouths so often, law, custom, vice, virtue, instinct, taste, spirit, matter, beauty, and ugliness, are so hard to define and are so little understood? Again, if I ask what I myself am, how hard it is to answer. What is a man? An animal, of course; but so is a dog, and so is a wolf. But a man is neither

* See Diderot's essay, "A Father's Talk with his Children," p. 170.—[Translator's note.]

a dog nor a wolf. How can we have precise notions of good and bad, of true and false, if we do not first know what man is? If you cannot define a man you are lost. How many philosophers, for want of these simple considerations, have applied to man the morality of wolves, which is just as foolish as if they had applied to wolves the morality of man. Every creature seeks its own happiness, and the happiness of one kind of creature cannot be that of another kind. Is there, then, a morality for each species of creature? And what is a species? A number of individuals with similar organs. What, is bodily organization to be the foundation of morality? I think so. Then Polyphemus, who was not organized in at all the same way as the companions of Ulysses, was no more to be blamed for eating them than they would be blamed for eating a rabbit or a hare. But then what shall we say of kings, or of God, who stands alone in His species?"

The sun, which had been lingering on the horizon, now sank beneath it, and the sea suddenly assumed a more solemn and gloomy aspect. The twilight, which is neither day nor night, is an emblem of our dim apprehensions; an emblem which warns the philosopher to pause in his speculations, and warns the traveller also to turn his steps homewards. I therefore retraced my way and mused on the question whether if one species of animals has one morality and another species

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has another morality suited to itself, may there not also be special moralities in one species suited to different individuals in it, or to individuals differently gifted or situated. For example (and as I would not shock your feelings, let me suggest a case which is not too serious), might there not be a morality suitable for artists, or for art, and might not this morality be the reverse of our usual morality? Ah, my friend, I much fear that a man would be led far wrong if he followed the path which leads the imitator of nature to the sublime. The poet's tendency is to go to extremes, while a just man is the rule of happiness. Practical life is inconsistent with poetic dreams. Heroes, romantic lovers, great patriots, inflexible magistrates, apostles of religion, philosophers, who are ready to sacrifice everything, all these rare and divine madmen bring poetry into daily life, and hence their misfortunes. It is they who after death are fit subjects for great works of art. They are good to paint. It is a fact we know by experience that nature dooms the possessor of genius and the possessor of beauty to suffer; it is because they belong to the realm of poetry. I called to mind a multitude of great men and women whose misfortune had arisen from the very gifts which raised them above their species. I praised mediocrity which saves us alike from blame and envy; and then I asked myself, why is it that, in spite of this, no one wishes to

lose their special gift and sink into mediocrity? What vanity there is in man!

The imagination and the judgment are two qualities which can coexist, and which yet are almost the contrary the one of the other. The imagination does not create anything, but imitates, recombines, arranges, exaggerates, or lessens. The imagination is always occupied in observing likenesses, while the judgment observes and compares differences and seeks for contrasts. The latter is the dominant quality of the philosopher, the former the dominant quality of the poet.

Is the philosophic spirit favourable for poetry? This is a wide question to which the above observations may have suggested an answer. You may observe more poetic vigour amongst a people in a primitive state than in a highly civilized community; there is more of this poetic quality among the Hebrews than among the Greeks, more among the Greeks than among the Romans, more among the Romans than among the Italians and French, and more among the English than in these last two nations. Poetry loses in vigour where the philosophic spirit makes progress; we do not cultivate what we despise, and the philosopher Plato drives poets out of his city. The philosophic spirit demands accurate and defined comparisons; her careful logical style is incompatible with vivacity and metaphor; the reign of imagery gives way gradually

before the power of facts. Reason trains the mind in exactness, precision, method, and, pardon the word, in a sort of pedantry which kills spontaneity. Civil and religious prejudices vanish, and it is strange how much poetic material is destroyed by incredulity. Manners become softened, and old customs, barbarous, yet poetic and picturesque, cease to exist; and poetry suffers more than you would believe from the monotonous politeness which takes its place. The philosophic spirit produces a dry and sententious style; abstract expressions which cover a large field of phenomena are used instead of figurative language. The maxims of Seneca and of Tacitus replace the animated pictures of Livy and Cicero; Fontenelle and La Motte replace Bossuet and Fénelon. The poetry which demands most vigour and fire is unquestionably the ode, but we have no odes written nowadays. The Hebrews wrote them, and with the greatest spirit; the Greeks also wrote odes, but with less fervour. The philosopher reasons, the enthusiast feels. The philosopher is sober, the enthusiast is drunk with ecstasy. The Romans tried to imitate Greek odes, but they are generally but feeble copyists. When do critics and grammarians arise? Just after the age of genius and its divine works. This eighteenth century will disappear and never be recalled; not that nature does not still produce great men, but they are stunted by the influence of a

depraved taste which is now prevalent everywhere. There is only one fortunate moment; it is when there is vigour and liberty enough to be enthusiastic, and sufficient judgment and taste to be wise. Genius creates beauties, and criticism points out defects. We need imagination for the one and judgment for the other. If I had to paint the portrait of Imagination I should represent her plucking the feathers off Pegasus, and teaching him to submit to Academic rules. He is no longer the impetuous charger who neighs and paws the ground with his feet, and rears and spreads his mighty wings; he has turned into a beast of burden for the Abbé Morellet to ride, and is become the type of workaday methods. Military discipline arises when there are no generals, and method when there is no such thing as genius.

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"Dear Abbé, we have been talking for a long time; have you gathered my meaning?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And do you feel that something more than words have reached your ear?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well, you are mistaken; you have heard words, and nothing but words. There are abstract expressions used in speech which stand for more or less general ideas, and there are representative words which stand

for physical objects. Do you suppose that while I was talking your mind grasped the abstract ideas of each word, or did you picture to yourself each physical object expressed by a word? Not so; it would have been impossible, my dear friend, for your mind to travel fast enough, and I should have finished my speech long before you had fully grasped the meaning of my first word; and when I had finished my account of a picture you would still have been sketching out the first figure in the scene described."

"You may be right," said the Abbé.

"Of course I am; I appeal to your experience. Listen to these lines :—

Deep hell is roused by Neptune's foaming rage ;
 Pluto grows pale, and rises from his throne,
 And cries, ' Ah! should his mighty trident pierce
 Our gloomy caverns and let in the light
 Through yawning chasm in the central earth,
 And show to mortal eye the mournful shore
 Of Styx that heretofore concealed lay ;
 A stream abhorred by men and e'en by gods,
 So fearful is the realm of death it bounds.'

Tell me, did you not, while I was reciting, see hell and Styx and Neptune with his trident, and Pluto pale with fear, and the earth opening, and mortals and gods—but no, you did not see all this."

"It is strange, for though I did not actually picture the scene and all its details definitely, yet the

whole grand and terrible passage left on my mind an impression of sublimity and horror."

"Yes, that is the mystery of daily conversation."

"And can you explain that mystery?" asked the Abbé.

"I will try. We were once children, a long time ago, alas! my dear friend. When we were children we were taught to say words, and to associate them with some idea or visible object, and thus to fix them in our memory. The idea or image was accompanied in our minds by feelings of pleasure or dislike, fear, desire, indignation, scorn; and for many years each time we heard the word, the idea or image rose up in our mind with the associated feeling. But after the lapse of time words became to us like coins which we use without stopping to examine the motto or image impressed on them; we knew their value by a glance or by their weight, and so it is with words. We no longer receive the idea or image, we only consider the sound and feeling. A long speech is now a series of sounds and associated feelings which the images or ideas formerly excited. We follow the speaker's meaning and pass judgment on it, but we are really affected by the number and violence of these successive appeals to our ears and feelings. Without this abbreviation we could hold no converse; it would take us a whole day to

express in words a long phrase and to follow out all the images and ideas excited by it. What does the philosopher do who weighs and analyses and pauses to ask the meaning of words? He goes back to the state of childhood. Why is the imagination of the child easily kindled while that of the grown man is slow to catch fire? It is because the child pictures to himself the objects which are described in words, while the grown man, accustomed to handle these words as coin stamped with the well-known image and superscription, merely adds them up or subtracts, and a long sentence is to him only a series of additions and subtractions. Hence the rapidity of conversation, which is carried on in well-known formulas; it is only occasionally that we pause (as they do in the market to turn over a suspected coin) when the subject is unfamiliar or original, or an idea is presented in a new light. Hence the pleasure we derive from an original writer, and the fatigue we experience from books which oblige us to think, and hence also the difficulty in making books and conversation really interesting. If I speak to you about Vernet's picture of a moonlight scene my words may remind you of the most striking parts of the picture, but you will soon give up the effort of recalling the picture to your mind's eye, and will content yourself with remembering your feelings when you saw it, and you will assent or dissent with my opinions

accordingly, and this will be your plan not only about the pictures in the *Salon*, but about objects in nature. Whom do we find most easily stirred to emotion and most easily beguiled? It is usually those who have remained children in spirit, and whom the habit of using symbols does not hinder in picturing to themselves mental images. Philosophers say that two different causes cannot produce an identical effect. And if any scientific axiom is true, surely this is. Now take two men as two different causes, and these two men may express the same words."

"What becomes of the axiom then?"

"It remains intact."

"And pray how so?"

"Because though the same thought may be expressed in the same words, or in the lines written on the same subject, there is only an apparent and not a real identity. It is the poverty of language which produces the apparent identity."

"I see," said the Abbé; "according to your idea these two speakers who said the same thing in the same words, these two poets who wrote the same lines on the same subject, had not the same ideas, and if the language had been rich enough to give their various shades of feeling they would have expressed themselves in very different ways."

"Quite right, l'Abbé."

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"There would not have been one word alike in their speech ?"

"Quite true."

"Just as their accents in pronouncing will be different and their handwritings will not have a letter alike ?"

"Just so ; really if you don't take care, l'Abbé, you will become a philosopher."

"Philosophy is infectious in your company."

"It is these various tones and accents you have observed, my dear Abbé, which supplement the poverty of language, and which destroy the identity which would otherwise appear to be produced by similar causes. The number of words is limited, but the number of accents and tones is infinite ; each person has his own individual mode of expression, and speaks as he feels ; he is cool or excited, calm or vehement ; he is himself all the time, although in idea and in words he may seem to resemble some one else."

"I have often been struck," said the Abbé, "by the disagreement between the words and the tones."

"And I also, but though these tones are infinite they are understood ; they are the language of nature, the forerunners of music ; they are the wellspring of musical form. Who was it who said that *Musices seminarium accentus* ?"

"It was Capella. You will never hear two persons

sing the same song in exactly the same manner; and yet the words, the air, the time, and the key are the same, and these similar causes would, you might fancy, almost compel the effect to be the same. But it is not so; the language of nature, the individual idiom, the personal feeling overpowers the meagre and ordinary language, and with its infinite variety prevents the identity of words and air, time and key from prevailing. Never since the world was created have two lovers said in exactly the same tone, *I love you*; and never in all future time will two women answer in similar tones, *You are beloved*. You may find this hard to believe, but it is true, all the same; it is what Leibnitz affirmed about the grains of sand."

"And pray what relation is there between this outburst of metaphysics, true or false, and the original question we were discussing; *the effect of the philosophic spirit on poetry*?"

"I leave you, dear Abbé, to find this out for yourself. There is always some amount of untruth in poetry; the philosophic spirit helps us to discern this, and then away with illusions. The first savages who saw the painted figure-head of a vessel imagined it was alive and real, and they laid hands upon it. Why do children listen so eagerly to fairy-stories? It is because their reason and experience have not taught them to be sceptical of marvels. When they are a little older, they

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will listen with a smile to the old nurse's tales. This is what the philosopher does when he listens to the poet's visions. Our matter-of-fact folk turn a deaf ear to old-world myths. It is easier to agree about a likeness than about a difference; we can judge better of an image than of an idea. An ardent youth is easily pleased, he wants to have and enjoy; but the old man is less eager, he pauses and chooses. If the young man wants a wife, it is the sex he loves, but the older man wishes to choose a beautiful wife; and in like manner, a nation is already on the decline when taste is developed."

MONTESQUIEU AND LORD CHESTERFIELD

THE President de Montesquieu and Lord Chesterfield came across each other while travelling in Italy. The two gifted men were well suited as companions to each other, and soon became intimate. They often discussed in what different ways their respective nations were superior the one to the other. Lord Chesterfield acknowledged that the French had more brilliancy than the English, but on the other hand he declared that the French were wanting in common sense. The President granted this, but confessed that he rated common sense much below brilliancy of intellect. The discussion went on for several days during their stay in Venice. The President meanwhile went about a great deal in society, asking questions and observing everything around him, and taking notes in the evening of the information he had gained during the day. One night he was sitting writing as usual, when a stranger was announced. The visitor was a Frenchman, rather badly dressed, who accosted him thus : " Sir, I am your

fellow-countryman. I have lived here for twenty years, but I have always cherished an affection for my people, and I am happy to have an opportunity of serving them. Now, I wish to do you a good turn to-day, which is to warn you that you may do anything you like in this country except interfere in political matters ; a careless word against the Government might cost you your head, and you have already spoken a good many. The State authorities have their eyes open, and know what you are doing ; you are watched, they dog your steps, they know all your plans, and are quite aware that you write down your observations. I know for certain that to-day, or perhaps to-morrow, they will pay you a domiciliary visit. Remember, sir, that some innocent remarks that you have written may, if wrongly interpreted, cost you your life. That is all I came to tell you. I will now take my leave, only let me beg that if you meet me in the street you will not recognize me, and if it is too late to save yourself, and you should be arrested, do not denounce me. This is all I ask in return for what I consider to be a valuable service I have rendered you."

Having said this the visitor disappeared, leaving the President de Montesquieu in the greatest consternation. His first act was to go at once to his writing-table, to take out his papers and throw them into the fire. He had just done this when Lord

Chesterfield came in, and, finding his friend in great trouble, asked him what had happened. The President told him of the visit he had received, and that in consequence he had immediately burnt his papers and ordered his chaise to be ready at three o'clock the next morning, for he intended leaving the place without delay, as a moment more or less might prove fatal to him. Lord Chesterfield listened calmly, and then said—

“Quite right, my dear President, but now let us pause a moment and talk the matter over coolly.”

“You are laughing at me,” said the President. “How can I consider the matter coolly when my life hangs by a thread?”

“But who is the man who has come forward so generously and exposed himself to great danger in order to save you? It is not likely that even a Frenchman would do this, however patriotic he might be, to save a stranger's life. He is not a friend of yours, is he?”

“No.”

“You say he was badly dressed?”

“Yes, very.”

“Did he ask you for money, for a franc or two as the price of his good counsel?”

“No, not a penny.”

“This is very extraordinary. And how does he get his information?”

"I don't know; perhaps from the inquisitors themselves."

"You forget, the Council of the Inquisitors is one of the most secret in the world, and this man is not likely to be in connection with them?"

"But perhaps he is one of their spies."

"Don't expect me to believe that they would choose a stranger for a spy, and that a spy, whose vile trade is so lucrative, should be dressed like a beggar, and that this spy should betray his employers to you at the risk of being strangled if you should be taken and should denounce him, or if you escape and they suspect that he warned you. That is all rubbish, my dear friend."

"But who can it be?"

"I am trying to find out, but in vain."

They went on talking till they had both exhausted all possible conjectures about the matter. Then, seeing that the President was determined to leave as promptly as possible for fear of risks, Lord Chesterfield, after walking up and down the room a few times, and rubbing his forehead with the air of a man who is struck by some profound thought, stopped quite short and said—

"President, wait a moment, I have got an idea; supposing that—supposing that this man—yes, it must be; yes, I am almost sure."

"Well, go on, what about the man? If you know anything, tell me quickly."

"If I know ; well, yes, I think I know now. Supposing this man had been sent to you by——"

"Well?—speak out."

"By a man who can play a trick sometimes, by a certain Lord Chesterfield, who wanted to prove to you by experience that an ounce of common sense is worth a hundred pounds of cleverness, for with common sense——"

"Ah ! you wretch !" cried the President. "What a trick you have played me ! And my manuscript ! My manuscript is burnt !"

The President could never forgive the peer this joke. He had ordered his chaise to be ready, and he got into it and went off that very night, without taking leave of his companion.

I, on the contrary, would have thrown my arms round his neck and kissed him a hundred times, and I would have said, "Ah, my friend, you have proved that there are some clever fellows in England, and perhaps I should have found an opportunity another time of proving to you that we have in France *some* men of common sense."

A LETTER ON THE DEAF AND DUMB

For the benefit of those who can speak and hear, which treats of the origin of inversions in language, of harmony of style, of sublimity of situation, and of some advantages which the French language possesses over other languages, ancient and modern, followed by some thoughts on expression in the fine arts.

I grant that this title will apply equally to the large number of those who *speak without understanding*, and the small number of those who *understand without speaking*, as to the very small number of those who *speak and understand*, and for whose special use my letter is intended.

I am not fond of quotations, especially of those from the Greek ; they give a learned air to a book, an air which is no longer fashionable. They frighten away readers, and if I were deciding from a publisher's point of view, I should leave out such scarecrows. But I am not a publisher, so pray suffer the Greek quotations to

stay where you find them. If you care less for a book being good than that it should be read, it is not so with me; what I care for is to make a good book, although it may risk being read the less.

As to the number of subjects I touch upon, flitting from one to another, I would have you know and teach that this is no fault in a letter, where one is allowed to digress freely, and where the last word of a phrase is a sufficient link to the next.

Now, in order to treat of inversions, we must first examine how languages are formed. Objects that strike the senses are those which are first observed, and those which unite various qualities which appeal to the senses are named first. Then the various qualities are separately observed and named, and these form most of our adjectives. Later on, these sensible qualities being put aside, some common point is noted in various objects, such as impenetrability, extension, colour, shape, etc., and from these are formed abstract and general names, and nearly all substantives. Men gradually became accustomed to think that these names represented real things, and the sensible qualities were looked upon as simple accidents, and thus the adjective was thought to be subordinate to the substantive, although the substantive does not really exist, and the *adjective* is *everything*. If you are asked to

✓ describe some object, you will answer that it is a body with a surface, impenetrable, shaped, coloured, and movable. But take away all the adjectives from the definition, and what will be left of that imaginary being you call a body? If you wished to arrange the terms of definition in their natural order we should say a *coloured, shaped*, extended, impenetrable, movable substance. It seems to me that a man who should see the object for the first time would be affected by the different qualities according to this order of terms. The eye would be first struck by the shape, the colour, the surface; the fingers touching the body would then feel it to be impenetrable; and eye and touch together would discover its mobility. There would therefore be no inversion in this definition, and there is an inversion in the definition as first given. It results, therefore, that if we wish to maintain that in French there is no inversion, or at least that it is much rarer than in the learned tongues, the most we can say is that our constructions in French are for the most part uniform; that the substantive is always, or almost always, placed before the adjective, and the verb between the two. For, if we consider the question on its own merits, and ask if the adjective should be placed before or after the substantive, it will be found that we often reverse the natural order of ideas. I say the *natural order* of ideas; for we must

distinguish between the *natural order* and what we may call the *scientific order*; the latter is the intellectual arrangement after the language is fully formed.

As adjectives generally represent sensible qualities, they are the first in the natural order of ideas, but to philosophers who are accustomed to look on abstract substantives as realities, substantives will come first in the scientific order of ideas, being, as they say, the support which upholds the adjective.

✓ Another idea that I would suggest is, that we should analyze, as it were, a man, and see what he derives from each sense. I consider that the eye is the most superficial, the ear the proudest, the nose the most voluptuous, the palate the most superstitious and capricious, the touch the most profound and philosophic. I think it would be amusing to meet a society of five persons, of which each should have only one sense; doubtless all these persons would look upon each other as mad, and I leave you to judge with what reason. And yet this is an example of what happens amongst us every day; we have, so to say, only one sense, and we judge of everything. ✓ We may remark that this singular group of five persons, each with only one sense, might yet by their faculty of abstraction have one study in common, that of geometry, and might understand each other on that one subject alone.

But to understand how inversions of language were

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introduced, I come back to my idea of obliging a man to remain dumb, and to translate his discourse into gesture language. We must forbid his using any ellipses, for gesture language is difficult enough already without adding to its difficulty by omissions of anything that can be expressed. The dumb man is to be free to arrange his ideas, or rather his gestures, in any order he chooses. But perhaps he would be tempted to imitate the order of words of the spoken language he is already familiar with, as some of our best modern Latinists fall into French constructions. If this obstacle arose we might have recourse to one born deaf and dumb. You will doubtless deem this a strange way of obtaining true notions of the formation of language. But consider, pray, how much less far from truth ignorance is than prejudice, and that a man born deaf and dumb has no prejudices with regard to the way he should convey his thoughts. I can assure you, sir, that a translation of this gesture language would do the translator much credit, for not only must he seize the meaning and the thought, but the order of the words must follow faithfully the order of the gestures. The words should represent the gestures as far as possible. I say as far as possible, for there are gestures so sublime that the noblest eloquence cannot clothe them in words. Such is the scene in Shakespeare where Lady Macbeth advances silently with closed eyes, and

rubbing her hands together as if she were washing away the traces of the King's blood she had shed twenty years before. I know no speech so pathetic as these dumb gestures, so expressive of remorse.

You know, or at least you have heard, of a curious machine with which the inventor proposed giving sonatas in colour. I thought that, if any one could enjoy such a performance of visible music, and could judge of it without prejudice, it would be a man born deaf and dumb. I therefore took my friend to the house in the Rue St. Jacques where the machine with colours was exhibited. Ah, sir, you would never guess the kind of impression that it made on him, nor of the ideas it suggested to him. You can understand that it was impossible to explain to him the nature of the harpsichord and its wonderful powers; and, having no idea of sound, this instrument with colours could not suggest any musical impressions. The purpose of this machine was, therefore, as incomprehensible to him as our organs of speech. What then were his thoughts, and why did he express so much admiration for Father Castel's coloured fans? This deaf-and-dumb man imagined that the inventor of this machine was also deaf and dumb, and that by means of this instrument he could converse with his fellow-men; he imagined, also, that each shade of colour represented a letter of the alphabet, and that by touching the keys

rapidly he combined these letters into words and phrases, in fact, conversed in colours.

You may fancy that he was delighted with his own penetration at finding this out, but our friend, not content with this discovery, went further; the idea suddenly crossed his mind that he now understood what music was, and the function of musical instruments. He thought that music was a special manner of communicating thought, and that lutes and violins and trumpets were different organs of speech. You will say this could only have been the idea of a man who had never heard music on an instrument of any kind. But pray consider that his theory, although clearly false to you, seemed to him to be almost a proved fact. When the deaf man recalls the attention he has seen us pay to music, and the signs of joy or grief depicted in our countenances as we listen, and when he compares them with the similar effects produced by a lecture, or by the visible objects around us, he cannot imagine that music gives no definite information, and that only vague and indistinct impressions are produced by vocal and instrumental music. And is not this an exact symbol of the way we form our ideas, our theories, and the conceptions by which so many philosophers have gained a reputation? As often as they try to explain matters which seem to require another sense which is wanting to them, so often have they shown

less insight, and strayed further from the truth than the deaf and dumb man whom I have been describing; for, after all, if we do not express our thoughts as distinctly by music as by speech, and if musical notes do not convey definite ideas, at least they convey some ideas.

Further, we may fancy that every one who walks through a picture-gallery is really unconsciously playing the part of a deaf man who is amusing himself by examining the dumb who are conversing on subjects familiar to him.

This is one of the modes in which I always look at pictures, and I fancy that I can thus easily discover when the treatment of the subject is false or ambiguous.

I often employed another mode of studying gestures and actions when I went to the theatre. There were many pieces which I knew by heart, and I would climb to the gallery to be as far as possible from the actors, and as soon as the curtain drew up I put my fingers in my ears, much to the astonishment of my neighbours, and kept them there as long as the gestures and actions corresponded with the dialogue which I remembered. When the gestures puzzled me, I took my fingers from my ears and listened. How few actors can stand such a test, and how humiliated they would be if I were to publish my criticisms. I may add that

the celebrated writer of plays, M. Le Sage, who had become very deaf in his old age, was in the habit of frequenting the theatre to see his pieces acted, and could follow them almost word for word; indeed, he said that he had never been better able to judge of his plays and their action than when he could no longer hear the actors.

It appears to me that in gesture language the principal idea should be given first, because it will throw light on the others, as indicating what the succeeding gestures apply to. When the subject of a proposition in oratory or in gesticulation is not made clear, the signification of the other gestures or words remains uncertain. This happens continually in Greek and Latin phrases, but not in gesture language when it is properly constructed. Suppose that I am at dinner with a deaf-mute, and he wishes to tell his servant to fill my glass. He first beckons to the servant, then looks towards me, then he imitates the action of a man pouring out wine. In this sentence it scarcely matters which of the last two signs is put first, but the position of the first gesture cannot be altered. Only an illogical mute could misplace it. For it would be like a man speaking without any one knowing whom he was addressing. As to the position of the other two gestures it is more a matter of taste, suitability, and harmony of style than anything else.

I do not know if any one can justly estimate a man's opinions and morals by his writings, but I think we can fairly ascertain what his intellectual powers are by considering his style, or rather his manner of constructing sentences. I will at least say that I have never found myself mistaken in my judgment. I have remarked that every writer whose sentences required a complete rearrangement in order to give them harmony would also have required an entirely new set of brains to make anything of him.

But how is it possible to write a dead language with correct constructions when there are so many various ways of arranging words? There is so much simplicity and uniformity in our language that I venture to say that if the French language dies it will be easier to write and speak it correctly than it is possible with Greek and Latin now. How many inversions we use now in Latin and Greek which would not have been allowed in the times of Cicero and Demosthenes, and which their refined ears would have forbidden.

But, you will say, have we not adjectives which are only used before a substantive, and others which are only used after? How can our grandchildren learn these subtle distinctions? In order to learn this it is not enough to read good authors. I agree with you, and own that if the French language dies future writers

who care enough about our language to learn it and use it will be sure to write indifferently; *blanc bonnet* or *bonnet blanc*, *méchant auteur* or *auteur méchant*, *homme galant* or *galant homme*;* and a number of other such phrases which will make their writings look ridiculous if we rise up to read them; but which will not prevent their ignorant contemporaries from exclaiming, "Racine has not written more correctly," or "This is just like Despreaux; Bossuet could not have said it better; this prose has the force, and elegance, and ease of Voltaire."

In talking to a deaf-mute it is almost impossible to describe to him indefinite portions of time or space or surface, or, indeed, to make him understand any abstract idea. One can never be sure that he realizes the difference between *I made*, *I have made*, *I was making*, *I should have made*. It is the same with conditional propositions. If, therefore, I was right in saying that men began by giving names to sensual objects, such as fruit, water, trees, animals, serpents, etc., and then to passions, places, and persons, to qualities, quantities, and seasons, I may add that the signs for periods of time and tenses were invented last of all. I imagine that for centuries men had no other tenses than the present indicative or infinitive, which became either a

* In Hindostanee the same word, I am told, is used for yesterday and to-morrow.—[Translator's note.]

future or past, according as it suited the circumstances.

I am led to think this by the present state of the *lingua franca* which is spoken by the different Christian nations trading with Turkey and the Levant seaports. I believe it has remained unchanged from former days, and that it will never improve. The base of it is a corrupt Italian. The present infinitive is used to express every tense, its meaning being modified by the other words of the phrase—thus, *I love thee, I was loving thee, I shall love thee*, are all expressed in the *lingua franca* by *mi amarti*.

I imagine that inversions have crept into a language and continued there because gesture-language gave rise to the language of oratory; I also think that, for the same reason, tense not being accurately defined even after conjugations were formed, some languages, as the Hebrew, which has no present or imperfect, went without certain tenses; while others used tenses for two different periods of time, as the Greeks, who interpret the aorist sometimes as a present, sometimes as a past tense. Let me quote as an illustration a passage in the “*Encheiridion*” of Epictetus, where he says: “These men also wish to be philosophers; man, learn first what it is to be a philosopher; examine your own nature and consider whether you are able to bear the burden. You examine your arms and thighs, and

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try your loins, if you intend to be a pentathlon or a wrestler." Here it was much more fitting to translate the first aorists and the second aorists by the present tense.

The Greek and Roman writers probably imagined in their discourses they followed the order of their ideas, but, evidently, it was not so. When Cicero begins his oration on Marcellus with the words: *Diuturni silentii patres conscripti, quo erant his temporibus usus*, etc., one can see that he was thinking of something besides the long silence—something which was to break it, and which urged him to say *Diuturni silentii* instead of *Diuturnum silentium*. This remark applies to all cases of inversion; and in almost all Greek and Latin periods, however long they may be, we generally observe that the writer had some reason in his mind for preferring to use certain cases, and that there was not the same inversion of ideas as there was of words. But we must remember that different minds may put their words in different order, and that the principal idea in one mind may not be the principal idea in another. For instance, in the sentence, *Serpentem fuge*, I would ask you, which idea do you suppose is the prominent one? *You* may say the serpent, but another may affirm it is the *fly*; and you may both be right. A timorous man thinks only of the serpent, but the man who fears my danger more than

he fears the serpent thinks only of urging me to fly. The one is overcome by fear, the other takes care to warn me. Another thing I would remark is that when we are setting forth a series of ideas to others, and the principal idea which we wish them to grasp is not the one by which we ourselves are most impressed (because we and our audience are differently situated), it is the former idea which we should present first, and this inversion is but a matter of oratory. Let us apply these remarks to the first period in the oration *pro Marcello*. I picture to myself Cicero mounting the tribune to make a speech to the people, and I see that the first idea that will enter their minds is that it is a long time since he last addressed them ; and, therefore, *Diuturni silentii* is the first idea he must present to them, although the idea prominent in *his* mind is *Hodiernis dies finem attulit*, for the orator will naturally dwell not on the thought of his long silence, but on the speech he is going to make. There is another reason for the use of the genitive case ; it being a case incomplete in itself, it would lead the hearers' minds to travel onward to meet the further ideas which the orator could not give at once.

It appears to me that French is, of all languages, the best organized, the most exact, and the most excellent, for it retains less than any other language what I may call the lisings of childhood ; in other

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words, by avoiding inversions we have gained in clearness and precision, and these are essential qualities in writing, but, on the other hand, we have lost in warmth, in eloquence and in energy. The orderly and didactic march of our language makes it peculiarly suitable for science, but those languages which permit inversions, such as Greek, Latin, Italian, and English, are more suited to express the subtleties of literature. Common-sense will choose French for its utterances, but the imagination and the passions will prefer the ancient tongues to ours. French is the language of society and of the schools of philosophy, but let us have Greek or Latin or English in our schools of literature and in our theatres. If truth return to this earth, I believe that French will be the language of her choice, while Greek and Latin and the other tongues will be used for fables and falsehoods. French is the language for teaching, enlightening, and convincing ; Greek, Latin, Italian, and English are fit for persuading, for rousing emotions, for deceiving. Talk Greek or Latin or Italian to common folk, but talk French to the wise.

Another drawback to inversions is that the attention of the hearer is more severely taxed. In a long Latin or Greek phrase how many cases of nouns and adjectives and how many tenses there are to bear in mind, till one reaches the end of the sentence ; while in French we are spared that fatigue, and can understand as we go along.

But there is a cause which both in the French and in the ancient tongues disturbs the natural order of ideas, and this is the demand for harmony of style, a point which is now so much insisted on that we are ready to sacrifice a great deal to it. For we must distinguish between the different stages that all languages pass through when they have left the early state of confused cries and gestures which we may call the animal state. These three stages are birth, development, and perfection. The newly-born language has words, undeclined nouns and adjectives without gender or case, and verbs without tenses and not governing accusative cases. In a developed language the nouns have genders and cases, and the verbs are conjugated and govern accusative and dative cases; in fact, there are all the necessary signs for expressing thought, but nothing further. In the stage of perfection something more is required; not only the intellect, but the ear must be pleased by harmony of style. In order to obtain this harmony the order of ideas is often disturbed. As for instance in Cicero's phrase *Mors terrorque civium ac sociorum Romanorum*,* where it is evident that *terror* should have preceded *mors*.

You may ask, when should the natural order be sacrificed for the sake of harmony? I think it may be done when the inverted ideas are sufficiently close, so as

* The death and the panic of the Roman citizens and allies.

to strike the ear and the mind almost at the same time, in the same way that in music we transpose the fundamental bass into a higher clef to make it more tuneful, although this transposed bass will really please the ear only so long as the ear can trace the natural progressions of the fundamental bass which suggested it. Do not imagine from this remark that I am a great musician, it is only two days ago that I began to be one, but you know how much one likes to show off some newly-acquired knowledge. I think we might find several other affinities between harmony of style and musical harmony. For instance, when we wish to describe some great or marvellous events, we are sometimes obliged to sacrifice, or at least disturb, the harmony of style and to say—

“Magnum Jovis incrementum.”

“Nec brachia longo

Margine terrarum porrexerat Amphitrite.”

“Ferte citi ferrum, date tela, scandite muros.”

“Vita quoque omnis

Omnibus e nervis atque ossibus exsolvatur.”

“Longo sed proximus intervallo.”

In like manner in music we must sometimes shock the ear in order to stimulate and satisfy the imagination. We may also remark that though a disturbance in the order of words is only allowed in order to increase the harmony of style, in music, on the contrary, licences in harmony are chiefly taken in order to excite

and give rise more easily to the musical ideas to be expressed.

In speech we must distinguish between thought and expression; if the thought is presented clearly and exactly this is sufficient for ordinary conversation; if you add to this a certain choice of words and a certain rhythm and harmony in the sentence you will have a style suitable for a lecture; but how far removed you will still be from poetry, especially from the noble style of the ode and the epic poem. There is a life breathed into those which gives them a peculiar charm. What is this living breath? I have felt its presence, but know not how to define it; I can but affirm that it not only describes but paints objects, that it appeals not only to the intellect, but to the imagination which it stimulates, till we see and hear what the poet tells us. We are presented not merely with a chain of well-ordered terms which convey facts to our mind, but we have a series of hieroglyphics which picture the thought to us vividly; in fact, I may say that all poetry consists of emblems.

But it is not every one who can understand these emblems. In order to feel their meaning we must almost have the power of creating them ourselves.

For instance, in these lines—

*“ Et des fleuves français les eaux ensanglantées
Ne portaient que des morts aux mers épouvantées.”*

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Who can appreciate the value of the first syllable in *portaient* to make us see the swollen bodies carried down the stream and choking its course? And in the second syllable of that word, who can see the mass of waters subsiding and the corpses floating down to the sea? The terror of the sea is expressed in the word *épouvantées*, and the emphasis on the third syllable brings before me the vast extent of ocean.

Again, the poet says—

“Soupire, étend les bras, ferme l’œil et s’endort.” *

We may all feel the beauty of this line, but it is not by counting the syllables on our fingers that we can appreciate its value, nor how fortunate the poet was to have such a word as *soupire*, with its soft drawn-out sound, to express a sigh.† We read *étend les bras*, but do we realize the impression of length and languor given by the long monosyllable *bras*, which falls so gently on the ear at the close of the first hemistich of the line? Do we perceive the rapid movement of the eyelid in *ferme l’œil* and the quiet change from waking

* Compare F. Myers’ essay on Virgil in “Classical Essays.”—
[Translator’s note.]

† Browning, who is so often reproached for his roughness, is singularly musical in his lines in “Saul” :—

“And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
Where the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.”

[Translator’s note.]

to sleeping in the drop at the end of the second hemistich *ferme l'œil, et s'endort ?*

The cultivated reader will no doubt remark that the poet has to depict four actions, and that the line is divided into four parts; the last two actions have scarcely an interval between them, and the corresponding parts of the line are also closely united by a conjunction and by the choice of a short vowel; in fact each of the actions takes up its due proportion of time in the verse, and, being all comprised in this short space, the poet has given them the swift succession which they have in nature. This is the kind of problem which a poetic genius solves unconsciously, but do all readers appreciate his skill?

I used to think that one poet might translate another; but now I know that I was mistaken. He may give the thought, and perhaps the equivalent expression, but we miss even in the best translation the suggestive sounds which depend on the distribution of long and short syllables, and of vowels between consonants.

Virgil says of Euryalus when he received a mortal wound—

“*Pulchrosque per artus*

It cruor, inque humeros cervix collapsa recumbit;

Purpureas veluti cum flos succisus aratro

Languescit moriens; lassove papavera collo

Demisere caput, pluvia cum forte gravantur.”

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I should just as much expect these lines to spring from a chance handful of letters as I should that a translation could give the full beauty of their suggestions: *it cruor*, the blood spurting up; *cervix collapsa recumbit*, the drooping head of the dying man; *succusus*, the sound of the scythe; *languescit moriens*, the sinking in death; *lassove papavera collo*, the soft stalk of the poppy—in *papavera* we have a symbol of the poppy drooping its head; and *demisere caput* and *gravantur* fittingly complete the picture.

It is the recognition and vivid realization of these emblematic expressions, hidden as they often are from ordinary readers, that discourages the writer of genius from attempting to render a poem into another language; and Virgil remarks that it is as difficult to catch the spirit of Homer's verse as to snatch a nail from the club of Hercules. The more a poet writes in this emblematic style the harder it is to do him justice, and Homer is full of such emblems. Let me quote these lines where Jupiter with his ebon brows ratifies his promise to ivory-shouldered Thetis to avenge the injury done to her son:—

“*Η, καὶ κυανέησιν ἐπ’ ὀφρύσι νεύσε Κρονίων.*

Ἀμβρόσιαι δ’ ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος,

Κρατὸς ἀπ’ ἀθάνατοιο. Μέγαν δ’ ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον.

“*Iliad*,” i. 528-530.

How much imagery there is in these three lines ! We see Jupiter's frowning brows in ἐπ' ὀφρύσι, in νεῦσε Κρονίων, and especially in the happy repetition of the letter κ in ἡ καὶ κυανέησιν ; the flowing hair is given in ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος ; the immortal head of the god is proudly raised by the elision of ἀπο in κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθάνατοιο ; the shaking of Olympus is expressed in the first two syllables of ἐλέλιξεν, the size and sound of Olympus are given in the last syllables of μέγαν and ἐλέλιξεν and in the last word where Olympus trembles with the closing line. It is the repetition of the letter λ in ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον which gives the idea of shaking and trembling.

Every imitative art has its own alphabet of signs, and I much wish that some man of taste and intellect would study and compare them. The beauties of one poet have often been compared with those of another ; but this task still remains to be done, to collect the beauties of each art and to show their analogies with one another ; to explain in what manner the poet, the painter, and the musician will each express the same idea, and to examine what likeness there is between the imagery of the different arts. I should also wish you to place a chapter at the beginning of your book to define in what the beauty of Nature consists. Tell your pupils that it is false that Nature is only ugly when misplaced. They ask me why a venerable, gnarled oak,

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with knotted branches, and which I should cut down if it grew near my door, is just what the painter would love to place beside a cottage if he were going to paint it? Is the oak beautiful, or is it ugly? Which is right, the painter or the proprietor? They also want to know why a scene described in a poem is not at all suitable to be painted on canvas. And in these beautiful lines of Virgil—

*“Interea magno misceri murmure Pontum,
Emissamque hiemen sensit Neptunus et imis,
Stagna refusa vadis; graviter commotus et alto
Prospiciens, summa placidum caput extulit undâ,”*

they ask why it is that the painter cannot represent the striking moment when Neptune lifts his head above the waves? Why would the god make such a poor figure in a picture when the effect in the poem is fine? Why is it that what appears to our imagination in words will not please our eyes when painted? Is there one beauty of Nature for the painter and another for the poet?

The poet and the orator gain by studying harmony of style; the musician finds that his compositions are improved by banishing certain chords, and avoiding certain intervals, and I deem them praiseworthy for these efforts, but, on the contrary, I blame that false refinement which would exclude from our language a number of vigorous expressions. By this means we

impoverish our speech, and though there may be only one term which fitly expresses our thought, we choose rather to weaken the idea than to express it by some vulgar term. How many words are thus lost to our great modern writers, words which we find with pleasure when we turn back to the pages of Amyot and Montaigne. They were at first discarded from a refined style because they were commonly used by the people; later on the common people who ape their betters also give up the use of these words, and thus they became entirely obsolete. I believe we shall soon become like the Chinese, and *speak* one language and *write* another.

A FATHER'S TALKS WITH HIS CHILDREN

OR

THE DANGER OF SETTING ONE'S OWN JUDGMENT ABOVE THE LAW

My father was a man of great common-sense and judgment, but pious withal, and was much renowned in the district for his strict honesty. More than once he had been chosen to arbitrate between his fellow-citizens, and even strangers who did not know him personally confided in him to carry out their last wishes. When he died, the poor wept his loss; and during his last illness both rich and poor showed their sympathy and grieved when he was heard to be dying. I shall always preserve his portrait in my memory; I fancy I see him sitting in his large armchair, with his serene countenance and quiet manner, and his voice still lingers in my ears. I will give an account of one of our evenings together; it is a sample of many similar hours spent thus in familiar converse.

It was winter, and we were sitting round him near

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the fire, the Abbé, my sister, and myself. After speaking of the inconveniences attending celebrity, he said, "My son, you and I have both made a noise in the world, but there was this difference, the noise you made with your tool deprived you of rest, but that which I made with mine deprived others of their rest." When the old cutler had made this little joke, he fell into a reverie and gazed at us with a strange fixity of attention, till the Abbé asked him—

"Father, what are you thinking of?"

"I was thinking," he answered, "that the reputation of being an honest man, though the most to be desired of all, has its dangers, even to a man who deserves it." Then, after a short pause, he added, "I shudder as I think of it. Would you believe it, my children, that once in my life I was nearly ruining you—yes, ruining you outright?"

The Abbé—"And how was that?"

My Father—"How, well,—but before I begin," and he turned to his daughter, "my child, just raise my pillow a little; it has slipped down." Then he said to me, "Son, wrap my dressing-gown round my legs, for the fire is scorching them. You have all heard of the curé of Thivet?"

My Sister—"That good old priest who used to walk four leagues in a morning when he was a hundred years old?"

The Abbé—"And who died at the age of a hundred and one on hearing of the death of his brother, aged ninety-six, who lived with him?"

My Father—"That very man."

The Abbé—"Well?"

My Father—"Well, his next-of-kin were poor folk, scattered here and there in the country and on the highways, some even begging their bread at church doors; they sent me a power of attorney, and asked me to go to the place and look after the property and affairs of their kinsman, the late curé. I went to Thivet, for how could I refuse to these poor folk the kindly services that I had often given to my richer neighbours? I sent for the magistrate of the place, and had the necessary seals affixed to the property, and then waited for the arrival of the next-of-kin. Ten or twelve of them shortly appeared. Some of them were poor women without shoes or stockings, almost naked, carrying their babies wrapped up in ragged aprons; some of them were old men in tattered raiment, who hobbled along with a bundle of old clothes tied to a stick over their shoulders; it was a picture of misery. Now you may imagine what joy was spread around by the thought that each of them would receive about ten thousand francs, for one might guess from the look of things that the curé had left property worth at least a hundred thousand francs. The seals were taken off, and I was

busy all day long making an inventory of the goods. Night came at last, and the miserable heirs retired and left me alone. I was anxious to finish the business, to divide to each his share, and to get back to my own work. There was an old box which I found under a bureau ; it had no lid, and was full of all sorts of papers, old letters, rough copies of the replies, ancient receipts, old accounts and bills and such like trash ; but on an occasion like this one must look through everything and pass over nothing. I was just getting to the end of this wearisome task when I came across a rather long manuscript, and what do you think it was ? A will ! A will signed by the curé. A will so old that the executors he had appointed had been dead at least twenty years ! In this will he had passed over these poor creatures who were sleeping near me, and left all his money to the Frémins, those wealthy booksellers in Paris whom you, my son, know well. You may imagine my surprise and grief. And what was I to do with this will ? Could I burn it ? Why not ? Was it not altogether an iniquitous will ? And remember the place and the way in which I found it, carelessly dropped among a lot of old papers. Surely this was a proof that it was not intended to be acted on, to say nothing of its unjust tenor ? I said all this over to myself, and pictured the terrible disappointment of the poor heirs who would thus lose the wealth

they had just begun to look upon as their own. I drew near the fire with the will in my hand, but then fresh thoughts came into my mind and fears lest I should decide wrongly in such an important matter. I began to distrust my own judgment. I was afraid that the cry for pity which sounded in my soul would dull my ears to the call of justice, and all at once I stayed my hand. I spent the rest of the night thinking over the matter, sometimes holding the unjust document over the flames, and doubting whether I should burn it or not. At last I decided not to burn it, but it was touch and go. In this perplexity I resolved to seek counsel from some learned person, and at dawn I mounted my horse and rode as fast as I could to the town; I passed my own door without stopping to enter, and went on till I reached the Seminary, then the home of the brethren of the Oratory. I knew one of them to be renowned for the saintliness of his life and the soundness of his judgment; his name was Father Bonin, and he left in this diocese the reputation of being an eminent casuist."

My father had got so far when Dr. Bissei came in; he was the physician and family friend. He asked my father how he was, and felt his pulse, and gave orders about some change of diet; then he took a chair and began to chat with us.

My father asked after several of his patients, and

amongst others about an old rogue of a steward to M. de la Mésangère, formerly the mayor of our town. This steward had behaved disgracefully, cheating his master in every way, borrowing money in his name, making away with deeds, appropriating other people's money, and most of these knaveries were now proved, and he was going to suffer severe penalties for them, or perhaps even be hanged. The whole country was full of it. The doctor answered that his patient was very ill, but he hoped to pull him through.

My Father—"You won't be doing him a kindness."

I—"You will be doing a very bad action."

Dr. B.—"A very bad action? And, pray, tell me why."

I—"There are so many wicked people in the world that those who wish to leave it should not be hindered."

Dr. B.—"It is my business to cure, and not to judge him; I shall cure him because that is my business, and after that the judge may hang him, because that is his business."

I—"But, doctor, there is one thing which is the business of every good citizen, yours and mine, to do everything we can for the good of the Republic, and I hardly think it can be to the advantage of the Republic to save a malefactor who is going to be put to death immediately by the sentence of the law."

Dr. B.—"And whose business is it to declare him to be a malefactor? Is it mine?"

I—"No, his actions prove him such."

Dr. B.—"And whose business is it to judge his actions? Is it mine?"

I—"No, but allow me, doctor, to state the case in rather a different way. Suppose you are called to see a patient who is a notorious criminal; suppose that you go to the bedside, you draw aside the curtain and recognize Cartouche or Nivet. Would you do your best to cure Cartouche or Nivet?"

The doctor, after a moment's hesitation, answered with decision that he would cure them; he would forget who the patient was, and only trouble himself about the nature of the malady. It was the only thing it was his duty to think of; if he went a step further he would not know where to stop. It would be dangerous to expect a doctor to inquire into the way of life and morals of a patient before he consented to prescribe for him, it would be placing the lives of men at the mercy of the ignorant prejudices and the passions of a fellow-creature. He went on—

"What you say of a Nivet, a Jansenist would say of a Molinist, a Catholic of a Protestant. If you drive me away from the bedside of the criminal Cartouche, a fanatic will forbid my visiting an Atheist. It is quite enough to dispense drugs to a patient without

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having to weigh and consider how wicked he is before we administer them."

"But, doctor," I answered, "suppose that the first thing the wretch does when you have cured him is to murder a friend of yours? What will you say then? Tell me honestly. Will you not be sorry that you cured him? Will you not cry out bitterly, 'Why did I help him? Why did I not let him die?' Would it not embitter you to the end of your days?"

Dr. B.—"Of course I should feel dreadfully grieved, but I should never repent what I had done."

I—"And would you repent—I don't say of killing, for that is not the question—but would you repent of letting a mad dog die? Listen to me, doctor. I have more courage than you; I will not allow myself to be checked by futile arguments. Say I am a physician, I visit a patient, I recognize a criminal; and this is what I say to him, 'Wretch, make haste to die; you can do nothing better for yourself, nor for others. I know very well what would relieve this pain in your side which hinders your breathing, but I shall take good care not to give you the medicine which would cure you. I do not hate my fellow-citizens enough to send you back into their midst, and to prepare eternal regrets for myself when you commit fresh crimes. I will not be your accomplice. Whoever concealed you in his house would be punished, and can I hold him

innocent who saves your life? I cannot be. My only regret is that in allowing you to die a natural death I am snatching you from the gallows. I will not spend my time in saving the life of a wretch whom by all the laws of nature and of equity and for the good of society I ought to denounce. Die, and let it not be said that owing to my efforts and cure there exists one monster more in the world.'"

Dr. Bissi—"Well, I must say good-bye" (turning to my father). "Now, don't drink so much coffee after dinner. Do you hear?"

My Father—"Ah, doctor, coffee is such an excellent thing."

Dr. B.—"At least take plenty of sugar with it."

My Sister—"But sugar is heating, doctor."

Dr. B.—"Rubbish! Good-bye, my philosopher."

I—"Doctor, wait a moment and hear what Galien said who lived under Marcus Aurelius. He was no ordinary man, although he believed in amulets and in the evil eye, and yet this is what he says about his directions for preserving new-born children: 'It is to the Greeks and Romans and all who follow their footsteps on the path of science that I address these remarks. As for the Germans and other barbarians, they are no more worthy of them than bears and lions, and boars, and other wild beasts.'"

Dr. B.—"I knew that. You are both wrong;

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Galien because he made such an absurd statement, and you because you quote him as an authority. You would not be alive now nor could you quote or praise Galien if Nature had not been able to keep alive the children of those Germans without his help."

I—"The last time that the plague raged in Marseilles——"

Dr. B.—"Be quick, for I am in a hurry."

I—"There were some rogues who got into the houses, pillaging and killing, and taking advantage of the general confusion to enrich themselves by means of all sorts of crimes. One of these wretches was stricken with the plague, and was recognized by one of the gravediggers whom the police employed to bear away the dead. These men went round throwing the corpses into the street. The gravedigger looked at the criminal and said, 'Ah, you rascal, I've found you, and he dragged him by the heels to the window. The wretch called out, 'I am not dead.' The other answered, 'You are dead enough for me,' and threw him at once out of the third-floor window. Doctor, it seems to me that the gravedigger who pitched the plague-stricken rascal so readily out of the window was less to blame than a skilful doctor, like you, who should cure him. Now, go."

Dr. B.—"Dear philosopher, I will admire your talent and ardour as much as you like, but your

morality is neither mine nor that of the Abbé, I will wager that."

The Abbé—"Your wager is an easy one."

I was going to attack the Abbé when my father smiled and said—

"You are arguing against yourself."

I—"What do you mean?"

My Father—"You want that rogue M. de la Mésangère's agent to die, don't you? Well, leave him in the doctor's hands. What are you whispering to yourself?"

I—"I say that Bissei will never deserve this inscription which the Romans placed over the door of Adrian IV.'s doctor after the Pope's death: 'The saviour of his country.'"

My Sister—"And if he had been Mazarin's doctor, the carters would never have said of him as they did of Guénant after the minister's death: 'Comrades, give way and let the doctor pass; it is he who has been so kind as to kill the Cardinal.'"

My father smiled and said—

"Let me see; where did I leave off in my story?"

My Sister—"You got to where you consulted Father Bonin."

My Father—"I told him the facts. Father Bonin answered, 'Your feelings of pity for the poor heirs do you credit, my dear sir. And if you choose to suppress

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the will and help them, I consent; but on condition that you pay the residuary legatee the exact amount of which you deprive him.' What a draught there is; go child and see if the doctor left the door open when he went out."

My Sister—"I'll look, but pray don't go on with your story till I return."

My Father—"Of course not."

My sister was absent some little time, and came back saying rather crossly—

"It was that fool who has put up two notices on his door, on one of which is written: *A house to be sold for 20,000 francs, or to be let, not on lease, for 1200 francs a year.* On the other is written: *20,000 francs to lend for a year at 6 per cent.*"

I—"Is he such a fool? Supposing it is all one notice, and not two, the latter a translation of the former? But never mind that, let us go back to Father Bonin."

My Father—"Father Bonin added, 'Who has given you authority to set aside or carry out this deed? Who has authorized you to interpret the wishes of the dead?' 'But remember, Father Bonin, the box was thrown aside.' 'Who has authorized you to decide whether the will was deliberately set aside, or whether it was accidentally mislaid? Did you never make such a mistake yourself, and discover at the bottom of an

old tub some valuable paper which you had carelessly thrown in?' 'But, Father Bonin, think how long ago the will was made, and how unjust it is.' 'Who authorized you to decide whether the will is just or unjust, and what reason have you to consider the disposition of the property as unjust, and not rather a restitution or something equally legal which you may just as well imagine?' 'But, Father Bonin, these heirs in the direct line are poor, while the other is only a collateral and rich' . . . 'Who has authorized you to judge what the deceased owed to his kinsfolk when you know little about the matter?' 'But consider, Father Bonin, what a heap of unopened letters are here from the legatee which the deceased had not taken the trouble to open!' I forgot to tell you," added my father, "that in the heap of papers where the unlucky will was found there were twenty or thirty letters of the Frémins, all with unbroken seals. 'There is nothing you can urge,' said Father Bonin, 'neither chest, nor date, nor letters, nor any ifs or buts which can weigh against the authority of the law. No person is allowed to transgress the law, or interpret the wishes of the dead, or dispose of the goods of another. If Providence has decided to punish either the heirs or the legatee, or the deceased, for we don't know which is meant to suffer, by the chance preservation of this will, let it be so.' After hearing such a positive and clear judgment from the

mouth of one of the most enlightened of our clergy I remained stupefied. I trembled as I thought what might have happened to me, or to you, my children, if I had burnt the will as I had been tempted to do a dozen times. I should have been tormented with scruples after burning it, and should have gone to consult Father Bonin. He would have urged restitution. I should, of course, have made restitution, and you would have been ruined."

My Sister—"But, father, you had now to go back to the vicarage and tell all those poor people that there was nothing for them, and that they must return empty-handed as they came. How hard it must have been for you, you who are so kind-hearted, to tell them that."

My Father—"I don't know how I did it. I first thought of giving up administering the will and entrusting it to a lawyer, but he would have carried out the strict letter of the law and turned all these poor people out of the house, while I might at least soften their disappointment. I, therefore, returned the same day to Thivet; my sudden departure and the precautions I took when leaving had already roused some uneasiness among them, and my melancholy looks on my return made them still more anxious. However, I tried to control my feelings and to conceal the news as well as I could."

I—"That means you did not hide it very well."

My Father—"I began by putting away all the valuables, and then I collected a certain number of the respectable inhabitants to help to keep order if it were necessary. I opened the cellar and the store-loft and gave up the contents to these poor folk, telling them they might eat and drink and divide among themselves the corn, the wine, and the provisions."

The Abbé—"But, Father——"

My Father—"Oh, I know very well it didn't belong to them at all."

I—"Now, Abbé, don't interrupt."

My Father—"Then pale as death, and trembling so that I could not stand, I sat down and opened my mouth to speak, but no words would come; I got up and began a sentence, but could not finish it for the tears that came. The poor frightened folk came round me crying out, 'What is the matter, dear sir?' 'What is the matter?' said I. 'A will; a will that disinherits you.' I could say no more, for I felt ready to faint."

My Sister—"I can fancy that."

My Father—"Oh, my children, what a terrible scene followed! I shudder when I recall it. I seem still to hear the cries of grief, anger, fury, and cursing. (Here my father put his hands up to cover first his eyes and then his ears.) I can still see those women, some

rolling on the ground, tearing their hair, their cheeks, their breasts; some foamed at the mouth and held their children up by the heels ready to dash them on the ground if they had not been prevented. The men seized what they could lay hold of, overturning and breaking everything, and they threatened to set fire to the house; while others, howling, scratched up the earth with their nails, as if they were trying to find the parson's corpse to tear it to pieces; and piercing through all this disturbance came the shrill cries of the children, unconsciously influenced by their parents' despair, and who clung to them till they were brutally repulsed. I think I never suffered so much in my life. In the mean time I had written to the legatee and told him all the circumstances, begging him to hasten to the spot that he might prevent any sad consequences which it might be beyond my power to prevent. I was able somewhat to calm the poor heirs by holding out hopes to them that the legatee would renounce his rights, if not altogether, at least, in part, and this I thought he might do. I then dismissed them to find shelter in cottages as far as possible from the village. When Le Frémin arrived from Paris I eagerly scanned his features, but it was a hard face which promised no good."

I—"Great black bushy eyebrows, small eyes peering under half-closed lids, a large mouth a little awry, and a skin marked with small-pox."

My Father—"An exact description. He had come at once, only taking thirty hours to come sixty leagues. I began by pointing out to him the poor folk whose cause I wished to plead. They were gathered silently before him ; the women were crying ; the men, leaning on their sticks, stood bareheaded, holding their caps in their hands. Le Frémin sat with closed eyes, his head a little bent, and his chin on his breast ; he would not look at them. I pleaded earnestly for them ; I don't know where I got my eloquence. I pointed out to him clearly how doubtful it was that the property had been really intended for him ; I dwelt on his wealth and their poverty and need of it ; I think I threw myself at his feet, adjuring him to have pity, but not a penny would he give up. He answered that he could not follow all my arguments and suggestions ; there was a will, and he did not care to go into the question of how or when it was made, and that my action in the matter was of more importance than any words of mine. I was so indignant that I threw the keys in his face. He picked them up and took possession of everything, and I went home so miserable and worn out and altered in looks that your mother, who was alive then, thought that something dreadful had happened to me. Oh, my children, what a wretch that Frémin was !"

We were all silent when the narrative was ended, each one musing after his fashion on this strange story.

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Then some visitors came in ; a fat prior, whose name I don't remember, who was a better judge of good wine than of questions of morality, and who had studied "The art of getting on" more than the "Lectures at Grenoble." The other visitors were a lawyer, a notary, a police-officer called Dubois, and a little later came a workman, who asked to speak to my father. Another visitor was shown in at the same time—a retired civil engineer, who devoted his leisure to his old studies of mathematics ; he was a neighbour of the workman, whose trade was a hatter.

The first thing the workman did was to hint to my father that he could not talk of his affairs before so many people. Every one got up to go, except the prior, the lawyer, the engineer, and myself, who were begged by the hatter to remain.

"Monsieur Diderot," said he, to my father, having first looked round the room to see that there were no other listeners but ourselves, "it is my confidence in your clear judgment and honesty which have led me to consult you, and I am not sorry also to meet these other gentlemen, who, perhaps, don't know me, but all of whom I know. Here are a priest, a lawyer, a scientific man, a philosopher, and a philanthropist. It would be strange if I could not obtain the good advice I need among all these gentlemen of such different occupations, all of whom are honest, clear-minded men."

Then the latter said—

“Promise me to keep this matter secret, whatever course I may think fit to take.”

We promised, and he went on to say—

“I have no children ; my last wife, who died a fortnight ago, never bore me any. Since her death I have not lived ; I can neither eat nor drink, nor work, nor sleep. I get up, and dress, and wander about the town with a gnawing trouble in my mind. I nursed my sick wife for eighteen years, and gave her every care and comfort that her sad state needed. The heavy expenses I incurred during her long illness have eaten up all my savings and left me burdened with debt ; and when she died I found myself worn out and no longer young, and all the fruits of my labour gone—in fact, I shall be as badly off as when I started in life, if I give up to her relations that portion of her dower which legally belongs to them. Her parents gave her a good outfit, for they were very fond of their daughter, and gave her as much, or more, than they could afford ; good clothes and linen, which are quite new, for the poor woman could not wear them, and 20,000 francs. As soon as I had closed my wife's eyes I hid away the linen and money. Now you know my difficulty, gentleman, did I do right, or did I do wrong ? My conscience troubles me. I seem to hear something inside me saying, ‘ You are a thief ! you are a thief !

Restore ! restore ! ' What do you think about it ? Just think, sirs, that my wife had, as I may say, by her illness, deprived me of all my earnings for twenty years, and now I am hardly fit to work ; I am in debt, and if I give up this dower there is nothing for me but an almshouse, if not to-day, to-morrow. Tell me, sirs ; I await your decision. Must I restore the money and go to an almshouse ? ”

“ Not before you, sir,” said my father, bowing to the priest ; “ will you speak first ? ”

“ My son,” said the prior to the latter, “ I am not fond of scruples ; they muddle the brain without doing any good. Perhaps you should not have taken the money, but having taken it, I advise you to keep it.”

My Father—“ But, reverend sir, surely that is not your final answer ? ”

The Prior—“ Upon my word, I don't know what else to say.”

My Father—“ You certainly have not looked at all sides of the question.” Then, turning to the magistrate, “ It is for you to answer now, sir.”

The Magistrate—“ My friend, you are in an awkward situation. Some people would advise you to settle the capital on your wife's collateral kinsmen, and to enjoy the interest yourself during your life. But there are laws, and the law allows you neither the interest nor the capital. Be advised by me ; obey the

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law, be an honest man, and, if necessary, take refuge in the almshouse."

I—"There are laws, but what laws!"

My Father—"And you, my mathematical friend, what is your advice in this knotty matter?"

The Mathematician—"My friend, didn't you say that you had taken about 20,000 francs?"

The Hatter—"Yes, sir."

The Mathematician—"And about how much did your wife's illness cost you?"

The Hatter—"About the same amount."

The Mathematician—"Well, then, if you take 20,000 francs from 20,000 francs there remains nothing."

My Father (to me)—"And what does philosophy say?"

I—"Philosophy is silent when the law is but folly."

My father felt that it would not do to press me further, and turning at once to speak to the hatter—

"Mr. So-and-So," said he, "you confess that since you robbed your wife's heirs you have had no rest. And pray what is the use of money if it deprives you of the greatest of all benefits? Get rid of it as soon as possible, and then eat and drink, sleep and work, and be happy, either in your own home or wherever you may have to go."

The hatter answered brusquely—

"No, sir, I shall go to Geneva."

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"Do you think you will leave your remorse behind you?"

"I don't know; but I shall go to Geneva."

"Go where you like, your conscience goes with you."

The hatter left the room, and we talked over his strange answer. We agreed that perhaps distance of space or time does weaken more or less all kinds of feelings, all sorts of impressions, even the remorse of crime. The assassin who is carried away to the shores of China can no longer see the bloody corpse he left by the Seine. Perhaps remorse springs less from hatred of one's self than from the fear of others, less from shame for the crime than from the dread of rebuke and punishment which will follow on its discovery.

And what criminal has hidden his crime so securely that he does not dread that some unforeseen circumstance or careless word may one day betray him? How can he be sure that he may not reveal it in the delirium of fever, or in a babbling dream? If he is overheard near the scene of the crime he is lost.

But in China he will be surrounded by people who know nothing about it. My children, the days of the wicked are full of disquiet. The good man alone enjoys peace; he only can live and die without anxiety.

The discussion was over; the visitors left us, and only my brother and sister remained, and we now

went on with our former conversation, my father saying—

“God be praised, we are by ourselves now. I like seeing other people well enough, but I prefer being alone with you.” Then, turning to me, he said, “Why did not you offer your advice to the hatter?”

“You stopped me.”

“Did I do wrong?”

“No, for no advice is good for a fool. What, is not this man his wife's nearest relation? Was not the money he kept back given to him as her dowry? Has he not the best right to it? What right have her collateral kinsfolk to claim it?”

My Father—“You consider only the letter of the law, and not the spirit of it.”

I—“I see what you also, father, must have observed, how little security women would have, how they would be despised and ill-treated right and left by their husbands if the latter inherited the wife's property at her death. But why should this law affect a man who has behaved well to his wife. ‘Have I not suffered enough in losing my wife,’ such a one may say, ‘and must I also be stripped of her property?’”

My Father—“But if you acknowledge the wisdom of the law, it seems to me that you should obey it.”

My Sister—“If there were no law there would be no theft.”

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I—"You are mistaken, sister."

My Brother—"Without law, everything belongs to everybody, and there is no such thing as property."

I—"You are mistaken, brother."

My Brother—"And what constitutes property?"

I—"It is originally what we earn by our labour. Nature has made wise laws from the very beginning; they are put in force by legal enactments, and these legal enactments press on the bad, but have no power over the good man. I am that good man, and in the circumstances we are discussing, and in many others which I will explain to you, I appeal to my own heart, to my conscience and to my reason—this is the court of natural equity to which I bring the legal enactments, and either submit to them or abrogate them."

My Father—"Preach these doctrines on the house-tops. I promise you they will be popular, and you will see what good results they will have."

I—"I shall not preach them; there are truths which are not fit for fools. I shall keep them to myself."

My Father—"For yourself, whom you consider the wise man!"

I—"Exactly so."

My Father—"Then, I suppose, you don't approve of my conduct in the affair of the priest of Thivet. But you, Abbé, what do you think of it?"

The Abbé—"I think, father, that it was very prudent of you to consult Father Bonin and to follow his advice; for if you had obeyed your first impulse we should have been completely ruined."

My Father—"And you, great philosopher, are you not of the same opinion?"

I—"No."

My Father—"A very short answer; give it more fully."

I—"You command me?"

My Father—"Yes, certainly."

I—"May I speak freely?"

My Father—"Yes, of course."

I—"No, indeed" (I answered, warmly), "I am not of that opinion. I think that if you ever did a bad deed it was on that occasion; and that if you would have considered yourself obliged to repay the legatee after tearing up the will, it is far more your duty to repay the heirs whom your course of action deprived of the estate."

My Father—"I must confess that the matter has always lain heavy on my heart; but Father Bonin—"

I—"Your Father Bonin, with all his reputation for logic and sanctity, was a bad reasoner, a narrow-minded bigot."

My Sister, in a low voice—"Do you want to ruin us all?"

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My Father—"Stop, leave Father Bonin in peace, and give us your own reasons without abusing anybody."

I—"My reasons are simple, and they are these. Either the testator wished to suppress the deed he had drawn up in the hardness of his heart; and everything seems to point to this, and you have made his retractation of no avail; or he wished his wicked will to be carried out, and you have been made the agent of his injustice."

My Father—"It is very easy to call it injustice."

I—"Yes, yes, his injustice, for all the arguments that Father Bonin brought forward are futile; all his conjectures and surmises are vain, without value, compared to the circumstantial evidence which deprives the unjust will of all validity, a will which you brought to light out of a dusty cupboard, and insist on executing. You find a box full of old papers, and amongst them an old manuscript thrown aside. It stands condemned by its date, its injustice, by its being in a lot of rubbish, by the death of the executors, by the contempt shown to the legatee's letters, by the wealth of that legatee, and by the poverty of the true heirs! What can you set against that? You imagine that it was a restitution; you imagine that this poor priest, who hadn't a penny when he came to his parish, and who took eighty years of his life to save up about

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100,000 francs, bit by bit, you imagine that he—who had never stayed in the Frémins' house, and who perhaps only knew them by name—had robbed them of 100,000 francs. And if the theft had been real, for my part, I don't . . . I should have burnt the iniquitous will ; I say you ought to have burnt it. You ought to have listened to the promptings of your own heart, which has been reproaching you ever since, and which knew much better what you should do than that fool Bonin. His decision only shows how formidable is the power exercised by religious ideas over the clearest brains, and how pernicious is the influence of unjust laws and of false principles upon common sense and natural equity. If you had been by the priest's side when he wrote that unjust will would you not have torn it in two ? Chance throws it in your hands, and you keep it."

My Father—"And suppose the priest had made you his heir ?"

I—"I should have destroyed the hateful will all the sooner."

My Father—"I don't doubt it ; but is there not a difference to be made when you are not the heir, but it is left to some one else ?"

I—"In both cases the will is either just or unjust, right or wrong."

My Father—"Now when the law orders that after

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death the papers of the deceased must all, without exception, be docketed and read, it has some reason for this, and, pray, what is the reason?"

I—"If I were sarcastic I should answer, 'To eat up the property by increasing the expenses;' but remember that you were not a lawyer, and were not bound to follow legal forms; your only duty was to act with benevolence and natural equity."

My sister was silent; but she squeezed my hand in token of approval. The Abbé shook his head, and my father said, "Another little attack on Father Bonin. At least you will grant that he, in the name of our religion, absolves me."

I—"So much the worse for your religion."

My Father—"And this will which you wish to burn at your own discretion, I suppose you allow that the court of law would have acknowledged its validity?"

I—"Maybe; but so much the worse for the law."

My Father—"Do you suppose the law would have set aside all the circumstantial evidence which you brought forward so forcibly?"

I—"I don't know, but I should like to have made sure, and I would readily have sacrificed 50 louis in the cause of charity and have disputed the will in the name of the poor kinsfolk."

My Father—"Oh, well, if you had been by me to give me that advice, although 50 louis is a tolerable

sum when one is setting up in life, it is very probable that I should have taken your advice."

The Abbé—"I would rather have distributed that sum to the poor heirs than to the lawyers."

I—"And do you think, brother, that we should have lost our case?"

My Brother—"I have no doubt about it. The judges keep strictly to the law, as do my father and Father Bonin; and they are right. The judges in such cases shut their eyes to considerations of pity, just as my father and Father Bonin did, because they know what dangerous results would follow; and they are right. Even when their conscience urges them in an opposite direction, as in the case of my father and Father Bonin, they will sacrifice the cause of the poor and innocent lest they should open the door to a thousand knaveries; and they are right. They fear, just as my father and Father Bonin feared, to make law give place to equity in one particular case, because it would be hurtful in a thousand others and let loose endless disorder on society; and they are right. And in this particular case of the will——"

My Father—"Your arguments would perhaps be of value in private, but they would not bear being brought forward in public. An unscrupulous lawyer might very well say to me in private, 'Burn that will;' but he would not dare write such advice to his client."

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I—"I understand ; it was not a matter to bring before a court of law. And, upon my word, if I had been in your place it should certainly not have gone there."

My Father—"You would have set your opinion above that of the public, your judgment above that of the lawyers?"

I—"Certainly. Did not the man exist before the lawyer? Is not the judgment of the human race to be respected much more than that of the law-giver? We call ourselves civilized, and yet we are worse than savages. It appears that we must go on for centuries veering round from one extravagance to another, and from one error to another, till we arrive where the first spark of common sense, or even instinct alone, would have led us straight. And in consequence we have gone so far astray that——"

My Father—"Come, come, my son ; common sense is a good bolster to rest one's head on, but I find that my head has a softer pillow in religion and law. Now don't begin to argue with me, for I don't wish to have a sleepless night. You seem to be getting provoked about it. Tell me now, supposing I had burnt the will, would you have tried to prevent my making restitution?"

I—"No, father ; I care for your peace of mind more than all the money in the world."

My Father—"Your answer pleases me, and for a good reason."

I—"Will you tell us the reason?"

My Father—"Gladly. Your uncle, the Canon Vignerón, was a hard man; he did not get on well with his fellow-canons, and was perpetually making them appear ridiculous by word and deed. You were intended to succeed him, but just as he was dying the family thought that it would be better to send in his resignation direct to the Ecclesiastical Court at Rome than to put it in the hands of the chapter, who might not accept it. The messenger started. Your uncle died an hour or two before the moment when the messenger was supposed to arrive, and there was the canonry and 1800 francs lost. Your mother, your aunts, our relations, and our friends all advised me to conceal the canon's death, but I rejected their advice, and had the bell tolled for him at once."

I—"You were quite right."

My Father—"If I had listened to all these good women, and had been struck later by remorse, I see that you would not have scrupled to give up your furred robe for my sake."

I—"Anyhow, I would rather be a good philosopher or nothing, than a bad canon."

The fat prior came back at that moment, and over-hearing my last words, "A bad canon," he said—

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"I should like to know how one can be a good or bad prior, or a good or bad canon; the office is a matter of perfect indifference."

My father shrugged his shoulders and retired to perform some private acts of devotion, which he was wont to fulfil.

The prior said—

"I have shocked your father a little."

My Brother—"Very possibly." Then taking a book out of his pocket, he added, "I must read you a few pages of a description of Sicily, by Father Labat."

I—"I know them; they are the story of the shoemaker of Messina."

My Brother—"Exactly so."

The Prior—"And what did this shoemaker do?"

My Brother—"The historian says that he was a good man, and a lover of law and order, and that he had much to undergo in a country where the laws were not only imperfect, but were never enforced. Every day was marked by some crime. Men who were known to be assassins went about publicly holding up their heads and defying the popular indignation. Parents bewailed their daughters, dishonoured and reduced to misery by the cruelty of their seducers. Unjust monopolies prevented an industrious man gaining a living for himself and his children; all kinds of injustice drew tears from the oppressed citizens. Criminals

escaped punishment either from their position, their wealth, or by the subterfuges of the law. The shoemaker observed all this ; his heart was smitten with grief, and he was constantly pondering in his mind, as he sat at his last, on some means of checking these malpractices."

The Prior—"What could a poor fellow like him do?"

My Brother—"You are going to hear. One day he set up a court of justice in his shop."

The Prior—"How did he manage that?"

I—"The prior wants me to tell my story as fast as he reads his matins."

The Prior—"Why not? Brevity is one of the arts of the orator, and the Gospel recommends short prayers."

My Brother—"As soon as he heard of some dreadful crime he drew up an accusation, and investigated all the circumstances carefully and secretly in his own house. When his double function of accuser and judge was over, the case settled, and the sentence pronounced, he went out with an arquebus under his cloak, and if he met the malefactors in some out-of-the-way corner by day, or while they were prowling at night, he sent five or six balls through their bodies that justice might not suffer."

The Prior—"I very much fear that that good

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fellow was at last torn to pieces alive; I should regret it."

My Brother—"After the execution he left the body where it fell without going near it, and returned to his own dwelling as satisfied as a man would be who had killed a mad dog."

The Prior—"Did he kill many such mad dogs?"

My Brother—"More than fifty, and all men of some rank. The Viceroy offered 2000 crowns to whoever would inform, and swore before the altar to forgive the offender if he would come forward."

The Prior—"What a fool!"

My Brother—"Being afraid that suspicion and punishment might fall on some innocent person——"

The Prior—"He presented himself to the Viceroy?"

My Brother—"He made the following speech: 'It is *I* who have fulfilled *your* duty. It is *I* who have condemned and executed the criminals whom *you* ought to have punished. Here are the statements drawn up of their crimes and the evidence. You can thus follow my judicial proceedings. I was tempted to begin with *you*, but in your person I respected that of the august master whom you represent. My life is in your hands, and you may kill me if you choose.'"

The Prior—"Which, of course, was done."

My Brother—"I never heard, but I know that, in

spite of this fine zeal for justice, the man was only a murderer."

The Prior—"A murderer! That is too severe. What worse could you call him if he had assassinated innocent folk?"

I—"A noble madness."

My Sister—"One might have wished——"

My Brother (to me)—"Suppose that you are the King, and that this matter is brought to you for judgment, what would you decide?"

I—"You are spreading a snare for me, Abbé, and I don't mind if you do entrap me. I should condemn the Viceroy to take the cobbler's place, and the cobbler to take the Viceroy's."

My Sister—"Quite right, brother."

My father now returned with that look of serenity which he always has after his devotions. We told him the facts, and he confirmed the Abbé's sentence. My sister added—

"And Messina was thus deprived of the only honest man she possessed, or at least of the only good citizen within her walls. I am sorry for that."

Supper was now served, and there was a little more discussion, while we laughed at the prior for his judgment in the case of the hatter, and for the little esteem he had for priors and canons. We asked his opinion in the case of the will, but instead of giving it he

told the story of something which had happened to himself.

The Prior—"You remember the great bankruptcy of the money-changer Bourmont?"

My Father—"Yes, of course, for I suffered somewhat by it myself."

The Prior—"So much the better."

My Father—"Why so much the better?"

The Prior—"Because if I did wrong my conscience is so much the more relieved. I was appointed agent for the creditors, and I found among the assets of Bourmont a bill of a hundred crowns on a poor neighbour, a corn chandler. If this bill had been divided between the whole body of creditors it would not have come to more than sixpence a piece; but if I had pressed the corn chandler to pay it it would have ruined him. I supposed——"

My Father—"That each creditor would not have refused sixpence to the poor wretch; and so you tore up the bill and gave alms out of my purse."

The Prior—"Just so; are you angry?"

My Father—"No."

The Prior—"If you will be good enough to believe that every one else would judge me as leniently as you, there would be an end of the matter."

My Father—"But, my good sir, if on your private authority you tear up one bill, why should you not

tear up two, or three, or four, according to the number of poor wretches whom you would help at other people's expense? This principle of pity may lead us too far, reverend sir; justice, justice——”

The Prior—“Is often a great injustice, as has been often said.”

A young married woman who lived on the first floor came down to us; she was the personification of gaiety and folly. My father inquired what news she had of her husband.

This husband was an immoral man who had set his wife a bad example, which it was said she had somewhat followed. The husband, to escape from creditors, had fled to Martinique, and Madame Isigny (for that was the name of our lodger) answered my father—

“Monsieur d'Isigny? God be praised! I have not heard any more of him. Perhaps he is drowned.”

The Prior—“Drowned! I congratulate you.”

Mme. d'Isigny—“What business is it of yours, sir?”

The Prior—“None at all; but it may be yours?”

Mme. d'Isigny—“And what difference does it make to me?”

The Prior—“Well, they say——”

Mme. d'Isigny—“Pray what do they say?”

The Prior—“If you wish to know, they say that he found some letters of yours.”

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Mme. d'Isigny—"And haven't I got a fine collection of his?"

And now ensued an amusing dispute between the prior and Madame d'Isigny on the privileges of the two sexes.

Madame d'Isigny called upon me to help her, and I was going to prove to the prior that whichever of the two married persons broke the agreement the other was in consequence set free, but my father broke off the conversation by asking for his nightcap, and sent us off to bed. When it came to my turn to wish him good night, I whispered in his ear as I kissed him—

"The truth is, father, that there is no law for the wise man——"

My Father—"Don't speak so loud."

I—"As there must be exceptions to every law, it is the wise man who must decide when the law is to be obeyed and when it should be set aside."

My Father—"I should not much mind if there were one or two citizens in the town like you, but I would certainly not live there if they all thought the same."

A LAMENT FOR MY OLD DRESSING-GOWN

WHY not have kept it? It suited me, and I just suited it. It followed the lines of my body without cramping me. I looked well and picturesque in that old dressing-gown, while the new one, so stiff and starched, makes me look like a lay-figure. My old friend, too, was always at hand to serve me in any emergency, for poverty is generally kindly. If a book were dusty, a corner of my gown was ready to wipe it. If the ink in my pen got thick and refused to flow, there were the skirts of my dressing-gown ready, and you could see the long black lines traced on them by the stubborn pen. These long lines were tokens that the owner was a writer, a man of letters, a man who toils; *now* I look like a well-to-do idle fellow, and no one can tell what I am.

Under its shelter I feared no mishaps, neither those of my valet, nor my own, neither sparks from the fire nor splashes of water. I was complete master of my old dressing-gown; I have now become the slave of the new.

The dragon watching the Golden Fleece was not more on the alert than I am now ; I am surrounded by cares. An old man, overcome by passion, who has yielded himself up, bound hand and foot, to the caprices and follies of a young girl, regrets his old housekeeper and nurse at every hour of the day. "What demon possessed me," he cries, "to drive her away in exchange for this girl?" and he sighs and weeps.

I neither weep nor sigh, but every minute I say "Cursed be he who invented the scarlet dye which makes common stuff precious. Cursed be the costly garment which I must treat with respect. Where is the venerable, humble, and comfortable piece of chintz?"

Oh, my friends, cling to your old friends and fear the approach of riches. Let my example warn you. Poverty has its freedom, but riches bring restraints. Oh ! Diogenes, if you saw your disciple dressed in the rich cloak of Aristippus, would you not laugh? Oh ! Aristippus, you paid dearly for that sumptuous garment. What a difference between your soft, effeminate, cringing ways, and the free and vigorous life of the ragged cynic; I have left the tub where I reigned to become a tyrant's slave. That is not all. Listen, my friend, to the evil consequences of luxury, of luxury which tries to creep into your life.

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My old dressing-gown was in harmony with the rest of my poor rubbish. A straw chair, a wooden table, Bergamo hangings, a deal board with a few books on it, some smoky prints unmounted, and just nailed at the four corners on the wall; between these prints were three or four plaster casts, all these, together with my old gown, produced a most harmonious effect of poverty.

Now everything is out of tune. Everything is discordant, there is no unity, no beauty. The scarlet intruder has produced as much trouble in my house as a new and stingy housekeeper causes in a rectory, or as when a widower receives a lady visitor, or a new minister succeeds another who has fallen from power; or as when a Molinist Bishop gets hold of the diocese of a Jansenist.

I am not disgusted at the sight of a peasant woman with a coarse piece of sacking on her head, her hair straggling down her cheeks, and her tattered clothes that hardly cover her. I don't mind her short skirts that only come to her knees, nor her bare feet soiled with mud; she is just a peasant in her working-dress whom I can respect, while I pity the misery and poverty inevitable to this state.

But what does offend my eyes in spite of the perfumed atmosphere around her, what I dislike and turn away from is a low woman in a lace cap and torn ruffles,

with silk stockings, and down-trodden shoes, who brings before me her present misery mingled with traces of the ill-gained luxury of former days.

My house would have been like this ill-assorted dress if the imperious scarlet gown had not driven away all tokens of poverty. I saw the Bergamo hangings taken down from the wall, where they had lived so long, to give way to damask draperies. Two prints, not without some merit, [Poussin's "The Fall of Manna in the Desert," and his "Esther before Ahasuerus," were driven away ignominiously; sad Esther gave place to "An Old Man" by Rubens, while the "Fall of Manna" has been exchanged for "The Storm" by Vernet. The new leather armchair has in like manner sent the straw one off in disgrace to the antechamber.

No longer do Homer, Virgil, Horace, and Cicero bow down the hanging deal board by their weight; they are now enclosed in an inlaid cabinet, a refuge more suited to their importance than to me. A large mirror now occupies the place of honour over the chimney-piece, and the two pretty plaster casts, which were the gift of my friend Falconet, and which he himself had mended, have been turned out by a stooping Venus—modern clay trampled by antique bronze.

I thought my wooden table had escaped notice, for it was completely hidden under a mass of papers and pamphlets heaped upon it. These should have been a

protection, but they were unable to save it from its fate, and one day, without my being consulted, all my papers and pamphlets were neatly arranged in a handsome bureau.

The tendency of fashion is, alas! destructive, it leads to ruinous expense and constant change; it alters, it builds up, it pulls down, it empties the father's purse, and prevents his giving a portion to his daughter or educating his son.

Oh, Fashion, it is you who produce so many beautiful things and such great evils, it is you who changed my wooden table for this costly and fatal bureau; it is you who destroy nations, and it is you who one day, perchance, may take all my goods to the bridge St. Michel,* where the auctioneer will shout out in his hoarse voice, "A stooping Venus going for twenty louis."

The blank space between the top of the bureau and "The Storm," by Vernet, was unpleasing to the eye, and this has been filled up by a clock—a clock worthy of the donor, where gilt and bronze make an artistic contrast.

There was an empty corner near my window; it seemed to be waiting for the writing-table which was sent to fill it.

There was another vacant space between the table

* The place where goods seized for debt are sold.

and the fine head of Rubens, and here two pictures by La Grenée were placed. On one side hangs a Magdalene by the same artist, and on the other a sketch by de Vien or de Machy, for I am fond of sketches.

It was in this manner that the sober retreat of the philosopher was changed into the shameful den of the publican, while I flaunt my luxury in the face of a nation's misery.

The only relic of my former simplicity is a list carpet. I feel that this shabby rug is out of harmony ✓ with my other luxuries; but I have solemnly sworn that I will keep this carpet, as the peasant who exchanged a cottage for his Sovereign's Palace kept his (17) sabots, the foot of Denis the philosopher shall never tread the rich carpets of la Savonnerie.

When I enter my study in the morning, clothed sumptuously in scarlet, I have but to look down, and the sight of my old list rug reminds me of my former state and checks all feelings of pride. ✓

No, no, my friend, I am not yet spoilt by prosperity. My door still opens freely to those who are in need. I am ready to listen with kindly interest and to give my advice, my sympathy, and my help. ✓ My heart has not grown hard; I do not hold my head proudly aloof. My back is still as round as ever, and as ready to stoop as before. I am as frank and as

pitiful as erst. My luxury is but recent, and the poison has not yet got into my veins. But who knows what may happen in time? What can you expect from a man when he forgets his wife and his daughter, when he ceases to be a good husband and father, when he gets into debt, and dissipates the money which he should be laying by for them?

Oh, holy father, lift up your hands in prayer to Heaven for a friend in peril, and say: "O God, who readest the hearts of men, if Thou seest that Denis is becoming corrupted by riches, do not spare the treasures which he worships; destroy them, and let him return to his former poverty." And I on my part will also pray to Heaven, and say: "O God, I resign myself to Thy will, and to the prayer of the holy father; I give up all my wealth to Thee, take all, yes, all—except the picture that Vernet painted. Oh, leave me my Vernet! It is Thy work, not the artist's. Spare this gift from friendship and from Thee. Behold this lighthouse, this ancient tower beside it, and this old tree torn by the gales. How beautiful is this composition! And below these dark masses are rocks with green vegetation springing from them; they are the work of Thy hand, Thy power made them, Thy bounty gave them their grace.

"Look at this broken ground which stretches from the foot of the rocks to the sea; it is an image of the

gradual wearing away by time of what seems most enduring in this world, and it is by Thy permission that time exercises this power. See how the painter has limited the sunshine. O God, if Thou destroyest this work of art, men will say Thou art a jealous God. Have pity on these poor shipwrecked folk; hast Thou not shown them the abysses of the deep? Hast Thou rescued them only that they may perish? Hear the prayer of him who now kneels to express his gratitude; help him who is there gathering up his scattered remnants of wealth. Close Thy ear to the curses of this fellow who rages against his lot. Alas! he had reckoned on a prosperous voyage; this was to be his last, and then he would retire to enjoy ease and tranquillity. A hundred times during the voyage he had calculated what his capital would be, and how he would invest it, and now all his hopes are disappointed, and he has hardly enough left to clothe his naked limbs. Look kindly on the affection of this attached couple; see how the frightened mother lifts up her eyes to heaven with gratitude, while the young child, ignorant of the perils it has passed through with its parents, is busy fastening the collar of the dog who has been a faithful playmate. Have pity on the innocent child whose mother trembled for its life more than for her own in the hour of their common danger. See how she clasps the child to her breast and kisses it. Behold, O,

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God, these waters which Thou hast made ; behold them alike when they rage and when they sink to rest at Thy command. Behold these dark clouds which Thou didst gather and which are now dispersing in obedience to Thy will. The dark masses are breaking up and speeding away, and now the light of dawn begins to spread on the face of the waters, and the rosy horizon seems to foretell a calm day. How far the horizon seems, and how indefinite ; it does not appear to touch the sea, no, that sky is over-arching the round earth beyond our sight.

“Let the blue sky everywhere appear, and let the sea regain her calm. Suffer these shipwrecked sailors to launch out their vessel again ; strengthen them for their task, help them, but leave me my picture. Leave it to me, even as a rod to scourge my vanity, for it will not be my discourse which men will care to hear, nor is it me they will care to visit ; it is Vernet who will be the object of their admiration, and the painter will supplant the philosopher.”

Oh, my friend, what a fine picture I possess ; the subject is a shipwreck where no one has been drowned ; the sea is still rough, the sky is dark with clouds, the sailors are busy about the wreck, while the peasants are flocking to the shore from the neighbouring hills. How cleverly the artist has managed with the aid of a few figures to bring all the incidents of the event before

✓ us. How realistic is the scene, and how vigorously yet delicately painted, and with what ease. I am resolved to keep this token of the painter's friendship, and my son-in-law shall leave it to his children and children's children.

✓ If you could only see this work of art, and observe how every part is in harmony; there are no detached points, but one part leads to another with easy grace, and each has its own value in (the whole). What an atmosphere is round the mountains, and how well the rocks and buildings stand out from the background. Here is a picturesque tree, and there a ledge of ground catching the light in a charming way. Look at these groups of figures, how well arranged, how natural they seem to live and move before us and to claim our attention. How pure these outlines; what richness of colour and well-balanced contrasts. What a width of horizon beyond these moving waters; the sky and clouds and distance all seem to us (real). The foreground is in light against a dark background, which is contrary to the usual disposition of light and shade. Come and see my Vernet, but spare my treasure. If time be granted me, my debts can be paid off; then remorse will vanish, and pure enjoyment be left. Do not fear that I shall be bitten by the mania of buying works of art; I keep my old friends, but do not add to their number. I have Lais, but Lais has no power

(7)

*well - balanced / well arranged
natural / real*

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over me; I am ready to give her up to one who could love her better, and who would appreciate her more than I do. And—to whisper a secret in your ear—Lais, though dearly bought by others, has cost me nothing.

A LETTER ABOUT THE BLIND,
FOR THE USE OF THOSE
WHO CAN SEE

Possunt, nec posse videntur.*
(VIRG. "Æneid," v., 231.)

London, 1749.

It was the same day that the Prussian (Helmer) operated on Simoneau's daughter for cataract that we went to question the blind man from Puisaud. He is intelligent and has made a good many acquaintances; he knows a little chemistry and has followed with some profit the lectures on botany at the *Jardin du Roi*. His father was a distinguished professor of philosophy at the University of Paris. The son was left a competence, which would have been sufficient to enable him to live comfortably and enjoy such pleasures as his loss of sight would allow him, but the love of pleasure led

* The original is "Possunt quia posse videntur." ("They succeed because they think they will succeed.") Diderot has adapted this to a new version which may be paraphrased: "They succeed though they do not see that they succeed."—[Translator's note.]

him astray when he was young; he got first into bad company, and then into difficulties. At last he retired to a small provincial town, from whence he pays a yearly visit to Paris, bringing with him liqueurs which he distils himself and which are much liked.

We reached our blind friend's house about five o'clock in the evening and found him teaching his son by means of raised letters. He had only been up an hour, for I must tell you that his day begins when ours is ending. His habit is to look after his household affairs and to work while others rest. At midnight he can move about freely, without annoying any one, and his first care is to put by everything which has been used during the day, so that when his wife wakes up she usually finds the house set in order. The difficulty which the blind have in finding anything which is out of its place makes them love order, and I have perceived that those who live with them share that quality, whether it be from the force of good example or from a feeling of compassion for them; for how miserable the blind would be if they were not surrounded by little attentions, when even we who are not blind would be much to be pitied if we had to forego them. Great services are like large gold or silver coins, which we rarely use, but little attentions are the small change which passes continually from hand to hand.

Our blind man can form a correct judgment of

symmetry. Symmetry, which is perhaps somewhat a matter of pure convention with us, is certainly so in many ways between the blind man and us who see. By force of constant study, through touch of disposition of the parts forming a whole, which we call beautiful, a blind man learns to apply that term rightly. But when he says, "That is beautiful," he does not judge, he merely declares the judgment formed by those who see. And is not this what three-fourths of the audience of a play do when they have heard it, or the readers of a book do when they have read it? Beauty is merely a name to the blind man, when it is apart from utility. And, with one sense less, how many things there are of which he does not even know the use! Are not the blind much to be pitied for having their idea of beauty limited by what is useful? How much they lose! The only advantage they gain from that loss is that their ideas of what is beautiful, though less manifold, are more definite than those of clear-sighted philosophers who have written a great deal on this subject.

This blind man mentions a looking-glass continually, but, of course, he does not know what the word really means, and yet he never puts a looking-glass the wrong way. He talks so well and sensibly of many things which are absolutely unknown to him that intercourse with him would considerably lessen the

force of induction, which we all unconsciously make from what passes in our minds to what passes in the minds of others.

I asked him what he understood by a mirror.

"It is an instrument," he answered, "which sets things in relief at a distance from themselves, if they are suitably placed in reference to it."

If Descartes had been born blind I think he would have approved of this definition. For consider, pray, the nicety with which he has combined certain ideas to obtain it.

Our blind man only knows objects by touch. From what others have told him he is aware that they know objects by sight, as he does by touch; he also has been told that one cannot see one's own face, although one can touch it. He, therefore, concludes that sight is a sort of touch which extends to distant objects, and is not applied to our face.

Besides, touch only gives him the idea of a raised surface. A looking-glass, therefore, he adds, is an instrument which presents us in relief outside ourselves. How many famous philosophers, with less subtlety, have reached conclusions equally false! But if a mirror astonished our blind man, how much greater must have been his surprise when we told him that there are some instruments which enlarge objects, while others, without doubling them, bring them nearer or

further, and reveal their smallest parts to the eyes of naturalists, while others again multiply them, and others change their shape altogether. He asked us a hundred different questions on these phenomena. For instance, he asked us if only naturalists could see with a microscope, and if only astronomers could see with a telescope ; if the instrument which magnifies objects is bigger than that which diminishes them ; if that which brings them near is shorter than that which sends them farther off. But what puzzled him most was that our other self, which according to his idea a mirror produces in relief, can escape the sense of touch.

"Here," said he, "are two senses which are brought to contradict each other by a little instrument ; a more perfect instrument would perhaps reconcile these contradictions and yet not make the objects more real ; perhaps a third instrument, more perfect and less deceptive, would make these contradictions disappear and show us our mistake."

"And how would you describe the eye?" asked M. de —.

"It is," answered the blind man, "an organ on which the air strikes, as this stick does on my hand." This answer surprised us exceedingly, and whilst we looked wonderingly at each other, he went on: "This is true, that if I place my hand between your eyes and an object, my hand is present to you and the object is

absent. The same thing happens when I search for something with my stick, and come across something else."

He has a surprising memory for sounds, and can distinguish as many differences in voices as we can in faces ; he can perceive an infinite variety of tones which escape us because we have not the same necessity for observing them as the blind man has. The aid which our senses mutually afford each other prevents our bringing any one of them to perfection. Our blind man told us with reference to this that he would have been tempted to regard us as superior beings in intelligence, and himself much to be pitied if he had not found that we were less gifted in other ways than he was. This remark suggested another to us. If this blind man, we said, thinks himself to be at least as gifted as we who see, may not an animal if it reasons, which we can hardly doubt it does, hold the same opinion as regard to men, when it weighs its own evident advantages over man, and is hardly aware of those which man possesses over the animal.

"He has arms," the gnat may say, "but I have wings." "He has weapons, indeed," says the lion, "but we have claws." The elephant will look upon us as insects, and all the animals, seeing that we have reason, yet lack instinct, will think that their instinct is superior to our reason.

One of us asked the blind man if he wished very much to be able to see.

"I think," he said, "that, if curiosity did not impel me to choose sight, I would just as soon have long arms. It seems to me that my hands would tell me more of what is going on in the moon than your eyes or your telescopes; and, besides, the eyes fail sooner to see than the hands to touch. It would, therefore, do just as well to improve the sense I already possess rather than to grant me the one I lack."

Our blind man knows so exactly the direction from which any sound or voice comes that I am convinced that the blind might be skilful and dangerous marksmen. I will give you an instance which will show you how unwise it would be to await a stone thrown by a blind man, or to be within pistol shot if he were accustomed to the use of that weapon. This blind man quarrelled when he was young with one of his brothers, who got the worst of it, for, annoyed by his disagreeable remarks, the blind man took up the first missile he could find, and, throwing it at him, struck him in the middle of the forehead and knocked him down.

This affair and some others brought him before the magistrate. Those outward signs of authority which affect us so much produce no impression on the blind, and our friend stood in the presence of the magistrate

as if before an equal. Threats had no effect upon him.

"What will you do to me?" he asked of M. Hérault.

"I will put you in an underground prison," answered the magistrate.

"Ah! sir," answered the blind man, "I have been in one for twenty-five years."

What an answer, madame! And what a text to preach on for a man as fond of moralizing as I am. *We* pass out of life as if leaving an enchanting scene, but the blind as passing out of prison; if we have greater pleasure in life, you must allow that he feels less regret at dying.

The blind man of Puisaud judges of his nearness to the fire by the heat, and of a vessel being full by the noise made when pouring in a liquid; and he judges of his nearness to objects by the action of the air on his face. He is so sensitive to the least changes in the currents of air that he can distinguish between a street and a closed alley. He is an excellent judge of the weight of objects and the capacity of vessels, and can measure with his fingers as with a pair of compasses, so that in that respect I would take his measurements rather than those of twenty people with eyes. He is also as sensitive to the smoothness of surfaces as to the tones of voices, and he can even make little things with a turning lathe and use a needle. He can also take to

pieces and put together again any ordinary machine, and knows enough of music to play a piece of which he has been taught the notes and time. By the succession of actions and thoughts he can calculate the duration of time with greater accuracy than we can.

He married in order to have the advantage of possessing a pair of eyes. When we expressed our surprise at his facility in doing so many things, he said—

“You are not blind, gentlemen, I know by what you say, and you are surprised at what I am able to do; but why are you not also astonished that I can speak?”

I think there is more philosophy in his answer than the utterer knew himself; for it is somewhat strange that we learn to speak so easily. We have a number of ideas which cannot be represented by outward forms, and which have, so to say, no body, and we are obliged to find terms for them by making use of a number of delicate analogies which we see between these terms and the ideas which they suggest. A man born blind must therefore find it difficult to learn to speak, because there are a much greater number of objects which do not appeal to his senses, and he has thus a smaller number of sensible objects to compare and combine in order to represent his ideas. For instance, how can he rightly use the word *expression* (with reference to the countenance)? It is a kind of charm which is produced

by means which do not appeal to a blind man ; and we ourselves, who see, often find it hard to explain where it resides ; if it is in the eyes, then touch is of no avail in conveying it ; and what does a blind man know of dull eyes, or sparkling or speaking eyes ?

As I have never doubted that the state of our organs and our senses exercises a great influence on our metaphysics and morals, and that even those ideas which seem purely intellectual, so to say, are very dependent on the conformation of our bodies, I began to question our blind man about vices and virtues. The first thing that I remarked was that he had an immense aversion to theft, and this came from two reasons—firstly, because it was easy to steal from him without his perceiving it ; and, secondly, because it was easy to find out when he stole. Yet he knows very well how to take precautions for himself against us who can see, nor is he ignorant of the ways of concealing a theft.

I suspect that blind people, as they can only be affected by the sound, and not by the sight of misery, will be more inhuman than others, for water and blood, when poured on the ground, sound alike in his ear. And are we not ourselves less moved by compassion when the object is distant, and does not the small size of the object have the same effect on us as want of sight on the blind ? So much do our virtues depend on our

~~sensations and the~~ extent to which outward objects affect us! In fact, I hardly doubt that many people, if it were not for the fear of punishment, would as little scruple to kill a man, when he was so far off as to be no bigger than a swallow, as they would to slaughter an ox. If we pity a horse in pain, and yet crush an ant without scruple, are we not acting on this principle? Ah, madame! how different the morality of the blind is to ours; and that of a deaf man would again differ from that of the blind; and if some being had one more sense than ours would he not find our morality defective, to say the least of it?

If a man who had only been able to see for a day or two found himself in the midst of a blind nation, he would either have to hold his peace or be considered a fool. Every day he would tell them of some new wonder, which would only be a wonder to them, and which their great thinkers would refuse to believe. Might not the defenders of religion find a useful argument from the fact that this obstinate unbelief, which yet was so natural in some respects, had so little basis? If you will for a moment imagine such a state of things, it will remind you by analogy of the persecutions undergone by those who had the misfortune to discover truth in the dark ages, and were imprudent enough to reveal it to their blind contemporaries, and found their bitterest enemies were those who, from their

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circumstances and education, would have seemed most likely to receive it willingly.

But I will now leave the morals and metaphysics of the blind, and pass on to less important matters which yet have lately been the chief subjects of observation with regard to the blind since the arrival of the Prussian oculist. And first, what idea does a man born blind form of the shapes of objects? By the movements of his own body, and by stretching his hand in various directions, and passing his fingers continuously over an object he obtains an idea of space. If he slips his fingers along a tightly stretched string he gets the idea of a straight line; if the string is lax he gets the idea of a curve. He can remember touching successive points and can then combine the memory of these points into a shape. His mind does not work as ours does; we combine coloured points, at least that is the way in which *I* imagine a shape, and I suppose that others do so in like manner; that is, I imagine a background of one colour and points of another colour standing out from that background. But the blind man can only remember touching certain points and combine by force of memory. I believe that we who see never imagine any shape without colouring it, and that if we are given little balls in the dark we immediately think of them as white or black, or some colour or other, for if we did not we should be in the case

of the blind, who only remember the sensations excited at the ends of their fingers by the touch of the balls. Our memory of sensations of touch is feeble from want of exercise as compared to that of the blind ; yet if we press the forefinger and thumb together we are distinctly conscious of the pressure long after it has ceased. While it lasted our mind seemed more at the end of our fingers than in our brain, and if ever a philosopher born blind and dumb should construct a man after the fashion of Descartes, he will certainly put the seat of his mind at the ends of his fingers, for thence come the greater part of his sensations and knowledge.

But if a blind man's imagination consists in remembering and combining surfaces which he has touched, and that of a man with eyes consists of the faculty of remembering coloured and visible surfaces, it follows that a blind man's ideas are more abstract than ours, and that in purely speculative matters he will be less likely to be deceived ; for abstraction consists in separating in thought the qualities of a body either one from another, or from the body itself, which is their foundation ; and the error arises when this separation is done in a wrong way, or at a wrong time ; in a wrong way in metaphysical questions, and at a wrong time in applied mathematics. There is perhaps one sure method of falling into error in metaphysics, and that is not sufficiently to simplify the subject one is treating ;

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He used the same instrument for algebraical calculations as for the description of rectilinear figures. He divided one large square into four smaller squares; at each point where two lines met was a hole for a large pin, and in the centre where four lines met was also a hole where a pin with either a small or a large head could be put. In this way he had nine holes, which represented respectively the nine numbers; a large-headed pin in the centre signified zero, a small-headed pin in the centre = 1; a large-headed pin in the centre and a small one in the hole immediately above it 2; if the small one were placed in the right-hand corner, the large one being in the centre, it would = 3, if in right-hand middle hole = 4; right-hand lower hole = 5; middle lower hole = 6; left-hand lower = 7; left-hand middle = 8; left-hand upper = 9. Here are ten different symbols for the touch, and now imagine a tablet with horizontal rows of such squares; such was the instrument used by Saunderson for his calculations. He used the same tablet for demonstrating the properties of rectilinear figures, arranging the pins so as to form the required figures. His fingers passed over the tablets with astonishing rapidity, and he was thus able to make elaborate calculations. Sometimes he stretched silk threads instead of using pins to complete his rectilinear figures.

He left some other instruments which facilitated his geometrical studies, but it is not known how he employed them. Some geometer might try to find out the function of four solid pieces of wood, in the shape of rectangular parallelopipedes, of which each was eleven inches long by five and a half inches wide, and rather more than half an inch thick; the two larger opposite surfaces were divided into little squares similar to the tablet I have described, but they were only pierced with holes in certain places, and the pins driven into the head. Each surface had nine little tablets each with ten numbers, and these are the numbers in one of the tablets:—

9	4	0	8	4
2	4	1	8	6
4	1	7	9	2
5	4	2	8	4
6	3	9	6	8
7	1	8	8	0
7	8	5	6	8
8	4	3	5	8
8	9	4	6	4
9	4	0	3	0

He is the author of an excellent work of its kind, "The Elements of Algebra," where the only signs of its author's blindness are the peculiarity of certain

demonstrations, which a man who could see would probably not have thought of. It is to him that we owe the division of the cube into six equal pyramids, whose apex is at the centre of the cube, and the base of each is one of the faces. It is used as a simple proof that every pyramid is the third part of a prism of the same height and base. His taste for mathematics, his small means, and the advice of his friends determined him to give public lectures on mathematics. His great facility for clear demonstration encouraged his friends to believe that he would be a successful teacher, for he taught his pupils as if they could not see, and a blind man who can argue clearly to the blind must be doubly clear to those who have eyes to see. His biographers say that he often used happy expressions. I can believe it; but you will ask, "What do you mean by a happy expression?" I answer, madame, it is using terms which belong to one sense, for example, touch, and which are metaphorical to another sense, say, the sight; from hence results a double light on the subject to the hearer, the direct light of the natural use of the term and the reflected light of the metaphor.* It is evident

* "The process of metaphor comprises two periods, the one in which metaphor is still visible and in which the name, while designating the second object, calls up the image of the first. . . . It keeps the mind on the alert, by causing it to seize, in a rapid comparison, different relations between the object of its thought and the object to which it is compared."—A. DARMESTETER [Translator's note].

that in these cases Saunderson, with all his genius, was not aware of the full meaning of the terms he employed. But does not this happen to any of us at times? It may happen to idiots, who now and then make excellent jokes, and to clever people who say a foolish thing, yet neither the fools nor the wise are aware of what they have said.*

I have remarked that a want of words in a foreign language has produced the same result in strangers who are not yet familiar with the language; they are obliged to say what they want to say in very few words, and this obliges them to use some terms in a very happy manner. But as all languages are poor in words suited to writers with lively imaginations, they are in the same situation as clever foreigners; the variety of situations which they invent, the delicate shades of character which they perceive, the naïveté of the pictures which they wish to draw, all these things draw them out of the usual groove in speaking, and oblige them to use terms of speech which are to be admired when they are neither pedantic nor obscure, faults which are more or less easily forgiven, according to

* This reminds me of a schoolmaster and a stupid boy whom he had to flog occasionally. One day the master found the boy fishing, and asked why he preferred that to more athletic games. "Don't you know," he said to the boy, "what they say of fishing, that it is a rod with a fool at one end and a worm at the other?" "And pray, sir," said the boy, "when you give me the rod which is the worm?"—
[Translator's note.]

the reader's powers of mind and knowledge of language. This is why M. de Marivaux is the French author who most pleases the English, and Tacitus the Latin author whom thinkers most admire. The eccentricities of language escape the modern reader, and he is only conscious of the veracity of style.

Saunderson was a most successful professor of mathematics at Cambridge. He gave lessons in optics, and lectured on the nature of light and colours, and explained the theory of vision; he wrote on the properties of lenses, and on the phenomena of the rainbow, and on several other subjects connected with sight and its organ.

AN EULOGY OF RICHARDSON

(*The Author of "Pamela," "Clarissa," and "Sir Charles Grandison"*)

UNTIL the present day a novel was considered a frivolous tissue of fanciful events, the study of which was dangerous to our tastes and our morals. I much wish that some other name could be given to Richardson's works, which, indeed, are styled novels, yet which
✓ elevate the mind, touch our nobler feelings, and breathe)
throughout a love of goodness.

The maxims which Montaigne, Charron, La Rochefoucauld, and Nicold wrote down are given by Richardson in a living form in his characters. — A clever man
✓ may be able to reproduce the maxims of the moralists, but these maxims will not enable him to re-write or correct a page of Richardson.*)

* The Emperor Napoleon, when writing to M. Bardier from Bayonne, in 1808, about a travelling library, expressed a wish that, out of 1000 volumes, 100 should be novels, and added: "The novels should, of course, comprise, in addition to the "Nouvelle Heloise," Rousseau's "Confessions," and some of Voltaire's stories, the best works of Fielding, Richardson, and Le Sage."—[Translator's note.]

A maxim is a general and abstract rule of conduct, the application of which is left to ourselves. By itself it offers no striking picture to our minds; but when we watch a man's actions, then we put ourselves in his place, or by his side, and we take part for or against him. If he is virtuous we sympathize with him, and if he is unjust or vicious we turn from him with indignation. Who has not shuddered at the character of Lovelace and Tomlinson? Who has not been filled with horror to see such a wretch feigning all the virtues with such an air of candour and dignity, with such a semblance of pathos and truth? What reader has not confessed in his inmost heart that he would be forced to fly society and to seek the solitude of the woods if there were many such dissemblers as these? Yes, Richardson, in spite of ourselves, you compel us to take our part on your stage, to join in the conversations, to approve, to blame, to admire, to be angry or indignant. How often I have found myself, like a child taken to the theatre for the first time, calling out: "Don't believe him; he is deceiving you. If you go there, you will be lost." My mind was kept in perpetual agitation. How good I felt myself, how just, how self-satisfied, after reading your books; I felt as a man does after a well-spent day.

In a few hours I had been carried through a variety of situations, greater than many ever experience in

their whole life. I had listened to the true tones of passion; I had seen the springs of self-interest and self-love acting in a hundred different ways; I had been the spectator of a number of incidents, and I felt the richer in experience.

This author does not harrow us with descriptions of horrors, nor carry us on a magic carpet to distant countries; in his company we are not in danger of being devoured by savages, nor of frequenting hidden houses of ill-fame, neither does he transport us to fairy-land. No, his stage is the real world in which we now live, the actions are true to nature, the actors live and breathe; they are the people we meet in society, and the incidents that befall them are such as might happen in any civilized country. The passions he describes are those I have felt myself; they are stirred by the same objects, and produce the results I should have expected. His characters suffer the same kinds of hindrances and griefs that constantly threaten myself; he shows me the course of events as they might be happening around me. Unless he had this skill the illusion would be but momentary, and there would be left on my mind only a feeble and passing impression.


the probable

What is virtue? Under whatever aspect we may consider it, it is in truth the sacrifice of self; for we are then in the frame of mind most favourable to carry out the idea into action.

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Richardson sows in our hearts the seeds of virtue, which lie dormant and idle for a time, and they remain thus till some opportunity stirs them to life and bids them germinate; then they develop rapidly, and we find ourselves growing in virtue with a vigour of which we had not known ourselves capable, while injustice now stirs in us a righteous indignation such as we had never experienced before. All this we owe to our intercourse with Richardson. We have been in the company of a good man at a time when our hearts were softened and ready to receive good influences.

I can recall the first time that the works of Richardson fell into my hands. I was in the country, and I well remember what happy hours I spent in reading his books. At the end of each page I regretted that my pleasure was the sooner coming to an end; and just as we dread parting from friends with whom we have long been intimate, so I dreaded the hour which came at length, and left me suddenly alone.

 This author is constantly bringing before us those objects which are of real importance in life. The more one reads him the more one wishes to go on reading him.

He seems to enter a dark cavern with a flaming torch, which lights up the gloomy depths; he shows us the subtle and unworthy motives which hide themselves behind the good motives which appear on the surface.

He breathes on the sublime phantom which guards the entrance of the cavern, and the mask falls off and reveals the hideous figure behind. He can make the passions speak, now with that vehemence which bursts forth when they can no longer be controlled, now with the artificial and affected moderation which they can at times assume.

He makes his actors talk naturally, whatever may be their condition or their circumstances and surroundings. If any secret feeling lies hidden in the mind of any of his characters, you will be sure, if you listen, to hear some discordant tone which reveals its presence, for Richardson knew well that falsehood can never imitate truth perfectly, because truth is one thing and falsehood is another.

If it is important that men should be impressed with the fact that, without regard to any future state, the best way to be happy is to be virtuous, what a great service Richardson has done to mankind! He has not proved this truth, but he has made us feel it. In every line he writes he makes us choose by preference the side of oppressed virtue rather than that of triumphant vice.

Who would wish to be Lovelace in spite of all his advantages? Who would not prefer to be Clarissa in spite of all her misfortunes?

I have often said to myself while reading, "I would

* Beato in the Republic uses this
as a criterion.

give anything to be like *her*; I would die rather than be like *him*."

If I am able, in spite of any bias which might disturb my judgment, to distribute impartially my scorn and my esteem, I owe it to Richardson. Read him again and again, my friends, and you will learn not to set too high a value on the men of inferior qualities who may be useful to you, and not to depreciate those highly gifted characters who may seem to thwart or humiliate you.

Fellow-men, come here to learn how to bear the ills of life; come, let us weep together over the lot of the sufferers in these works of fiction, and let us say to ourselves, "When adverse fate overwhelms us, we in our turn shall at least have the sympathy of good people."

Richardson tries especially to interest us in those who are unhappy. In his works, as in the world outside, men are divided into two classes: those who enjoy life and those to whom life is full of suffering. He always makes me sympathize with the latter; and unconsciously I find my feelings of pity grow stronger by use. After reading him I find a pleasing melancholy stealing over me; sometimes my friends remark it, and say, "What is the matter with you; you don't seem in your usual spirits; has anything happened?" They ask after my health, my affairs, my relations, and my friends.

Oh, my dear friends, these three works—"Pamela," "Clarissa," and "Grandison"—are three great dramas! ✱
 I could not bear to be called away from reading them to attend to some important business; I let the business go; I took up again a volume of Richardson. Beware of opening these fascinating books when you have some important duties to fulfil.

Who can read Richardson's works without wishing to know him, to have him for a brother or a friend? Who would not wish him every possible blessing?

Ah! Richardson, I have found no one like you; your books shall be my constant companions. If I am obliged through adverse circumstances, by the needs of a friend or the expense of educating my children, to sell my books, you at least shall remain on my shelves, together with Moses, Homer, Euripides and Sophocles, and I will read you by turns.

The nobler the mind, the more refined and the purer the taste; the more one knows human nature, and the greater the love of truth, the more one will appreciate the works of Richardson. I have felt indignant when I have heard this author accused of being too lengthy, and of putting in too many details.

It is dangerous for a man of genius to overstep the boundaries of art which have been set up by custom and time; woe to him if he treads under foot the ancient

formulas. Not till after his death will he perchance receive the just praise he deserves.

Yet let us be reasonable. Richardson's works must appear lengthy to a nation full of varied occupation for whom the twenty-four hours of the day are not long enough for all the amusements with which they are wont to fill up their time. It is for this reason that the French have no opera and that soon their theatres will only play detached scenes from comedies and tragedies.

My dear fellow-citizens, if Richardson's novels are too long for you, why not cut them short? Be consistent at least; you now go to a tragedy just in time to see the last act; why not skip till you reach the last twenty pages of "Clarissa?"

The details which Richardson gives displease, and must necessarily displease a frivolous thoughtless reader; but he does not write for such; he writes for the quiet, solitary reader, who knows what the noise and pleasures of the world are worth, and who prefers a shady retreat where he can pass his hours profitably in sympathetic silence.

You accuse Richardson of being lengthy, but have you then forgotten what trouble it costs, what anxieties, what going to and fro in order to carry out any business, whether it be to finish a lawsuit, to arrange a marriage, or to bring about a reconciliation. You may not care for such details, but they interest me when

they are true to nature, when they show the workings of passion, and the development of character. //

They are so commonplace, you say, just what one sees every day. But there is where you are mistaken; such things do happen every day under your eyes, but you do not see them. Take care, you are condemning all the great poets when you condemn Richardson for this. You have seen the sun set and the stars rise a hundred times; and you have often heard the joyous burst of song from the birds in the woods. But which of you has realized that it is the contrast of the noises of the daylight hours which make the silent hours of the night so impressive? And it is just the same in regard to moral phenomena; you have often seen the ebullitions of passion among men, but you could not understand all the hidden meanings in their tones or in their facial expressions. Each passion has its own mode of expression, and these different expressions may follow each other on the same countenance without its ceasing to be the same; and the art of the great poet and the great painter is to make you conscious of some quickly passing mood which had escaped your observation.

Painters, poets, men of taste, men of good feeling, you should read Richardson, and read him constantly.

Remember that illusion is produced by a number of small details; it is very difficult to imagine them, and

still more difficult to paint them. The gesture is sometimes as noble as the speech; and besides, it is these truthful details which prepare the mind for strong effects to be produced by great events. When you have grown impatient over the momentary delays which, like an embankment, have checked your progress, how eagerly you press forward directly the author sweeps away the barrier. Then, overcome by grief or transported by joy, you will not try to check your tears nor stop to ask: Is it true? No, you have gradually been led to a state of mind where such a thought, such a question, has become impossible.

I have sometimes dreamt (when my mind was full of Richardson's novels) that I had bought an old castle, and that, going through its rooms one day I perceived an ancient cabinet which had not been opened for years; forcing it open, I dreamt that I found in it a confused heap of letters, the letters of Clarissa and Pamela; after reading some of them I eagerly arranged them according to their dates, and how disappointed I should have been if any had been missing. Do you think that I would have allowed any rash (I had almost said sacrilegious) hand to suppress one line?

You who have only read Richardson in your elegant French translation * may think you know him, but you are mistaken.

* The edition was incomplete.

You do not know Lovelace, nor Clementina, nor the unfortunate Clarissa; you do not know Miss Howe, his dear sweet Miss Howe, for you have not seen her with dishevelled hair stretched on the coffin of her friend, with her arms wildly gesticulating, and her streaming eyes looking to heaven, filling the house with her shrill cries, and calling down imprecations on its cruel owners, the Harlowes. You cannot understand how impressive are the details which you with your exquisite taste would have suppressed. You have not heard the mournful notes of the passing bell borne on the wind to the dwelling of the Harlowes, and awakening in their stony hearts the remorse they had lulled to sleep. You did not see how they trembled at the sound of the wheels which were bearing away the body of their victim. It was then that the dreary silence that had reigned was at length broken by the sobs of the father and mother, it was then that the true punishment of those wicked souls began, and they felt the serpent gnawing at their hearts. Happy were those who could find relief in tears.

I have remarked that in whatever society Richardson was read, either in public or private, the conversation became more lively and interesting.

I have heard the most important points of morals and of taste seriously discussed after such readings.

I have heard disputes arise about the conduct of

the persons in his novels, just as if they were real; I have heard Pamela, Clarissa and Grandison praised and blamed as if they were living, and we had known them and had felt the greatest interest in them.

Any one who had not been present at the reading which had brought on this discussion, would have imagined from the warmth and eagerness of the speakers that we were talking about a neighbour, a relation, a friend, or a brother or sister.

I may go further, and say that I have seen diversity of opinions amongst the company produce the same secret dislike and half-concealed contempt, in fact the same separation among friends, as if the subject had been one of the most serious importance. Then I felt inclined to compare Richardson's work to a more sacred volume, to the gospel which came on earth to separate husband and wife, father and son, mother and daughter, brother and sister; and the effect thus produced put the work in the category of the best productions of Nature. They all originate from an almighty hand and an infinitely wise intelligence, and they all fail in some one respect. A present good may be the source of a great evil, and an evil may produce a great good.

But what does this signify if, thanks to this author, I can love my neighbours better, and love duty more; if I have learnt to feel only pity for the wicked; if I have gained more sympathy with the wretched, more

respect for the good, if I am more careful about the right use of the things around me, and less anxious about future events; if I have learnt to care less for life and more for goodness; for this last is the only gift we can rightly ask heaven for, and the only one which heaven can grant us without punishing us for an indiscreet request. *

I know the Harlowes' house as well as my own; I am not more familiar with my father's dwelling than with the Grandisons. I have pictured to myself the actors whom the author brings on his stage, I know their faces, I recognize them in the street, in places of public resort, in their homes; I like or dislike them. ✓ One of the advantages of his writings is that he has embraced so wide a field that I am perpetually coming across some scene which he has made familiar to me. If I meet half a dozen people I am almost sure to name them after some of his characters. He bids me make acquaintance with good people, and warns me of bad characters; he has taught me how to recognize them quickly by a number of delicate indications. He is my guide almost without my being aware of it.

The works of Richardson will please every one, more or less, at all times and in all places, but the number of readers who can truly appreciate him will always be small; a cultivated taste is necessary, and careful reading, for he presents such a variety of events linked

together by an intricate plot in many ways, and yet his combinations are so skilfully prepared that risky situations are avoided. Besides this, there are so many actors, so many characters are brought before us, that when I have read a few pages of *Clarissa* I find myself acquainted with fifteen or sixteen people, and a little further on the number is doubled. There are no less than forty in "Sir Charles Grandison;" but what fills me with astonishment is that each character has his own ideas, his own expressions, and his peculiar manner, and that, moreover, these all vary according to the circumstances, the actions, and the passions of each individual, just as one sees the signs of different feelings passing over the same countenance of the same person. A discriminating reader will never mistake a letter of Mrs. Norton for a letter of one of *Clarissa's* aunts, nor the letter of one aunt for that of another aunt or of Mrs. Howe; nor one of Mrs. Howe's notes for one from Mrs. Harlowe, although these various characters may have the same kind of feelings or be in the same relative position towards some object. This immortal book resembles nature in spring; you will never find two leaves the same tint of green. What an immense variety of shades are given here; if it is difficult for the reader to grasp them all how much more difficult it must have been for the writer to observe and paint them!

⊛ See Aristotle on this

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Oh, Richardson, I would dare affirm that the most accurate history is full of lies, and that your novel is

⊛ full of truths. History delineates a few characters, but you paint the human race; history attributes to some individuals certain speeches and actions which they neither said nor did, but what you attribute to a human being he really said and did. history only gives us a small portion of time, and a small part of the globe, but your vision embraces all times and places. || ⊛

⊛ The model you follow is the human heart, which has been, and always will be, the same. Could the best historian bear severe criticism of his work as well as you could? And I would dare assert that in this respect history is often a bad novel, and that a novel such as you write is a good history. You are the true painter of nature, and you never lie.

⊛ I cannot weary of admiring your capacious intellect, which could carry on a drama of thirty or forty persons, who all act according to the characters you have given them. You show an astonishing knowledge of the laws and customs and manners of the human heart and of life. How much you must have observed, and felt, and weighed in the moral balance! ✓

The charm and interest of the story carry on even the thoughtful reader, and make him less conscious (than he would otherwise be) of the delicate art displayed by Richardson. I have several times begun

X to read "Clarissa" in order to study the style, but ere I had reached the twentieth page I had forgotten my intention, and could only be struck, as ordinary readers are, by the genius with which he has drawn a young girl. She is very modest and prudent, yet is continually making false moves, for which one cannot blame her, because she has cruel parents, and her lover is a vile wretch; he has also given this modest young woman a friend who is a wild, lively girl, always saying or doing something foolish; this character is also true to life; she has a good, kind lover, but he is dull and ridiculous, and is laughed at by the girl in spite of her mother supporting him and urging his suit. In Lovelace we see combined the finest qualities and the most odious vices, meanness with generosity, depth with frivolity, violence with collectedness, good sense with folly; all these go to make up a man whom by turns we hate, we love, we admire, we despise, but who is a striking character whenever and under whatever form he appears, for he is never the same.

And how well the lesser characters are marked out, and how various they are. There is Belfort and his companions, Mrs. Howe and her Hickman; Mrs. Norton and the whole tribe of Harlowes, father, mother, brother, sister, uncles and aunts; and besides this all the creatures in the house of bad fame. What contrasts there are of interests and humours, how all

the actors live and speak on this stage! How could a poor lone girl, surrounded by such enemies, avoid being overcome by them; and after all what was her fault?

In "Grandison" we see the same variety of characters under very different circumstances, but is not the treatment of the plot and the situations as powerful?

"Pamela" is simpler in construction, not so long and with less intricate plot, but does it not show equal genius? Now here are three works, any one of which would suffice to immortalize the writer of them.

Since I have known them I use them as a touchstone, and when they are not appreciated I know in what esteem to hold such persons. When I have mentioned them to any friend I respected I have always trembled lest his judgment should not coincide with mine. And when I meet any one who is as enthusiastic about them as myself I feel inclined to clasp him in my arms and embrace him.

Richardson is no more. What a loss to literature and to humanity. I felt his death as if he had been my brother. I cherished him in my heart though I had never seen him, and only knew him in his works.

Whenever I came across one of his fellow-countrymen, or one of mine who had been in England, I always asked, "Did you see the poet Richardson?" and then, "Did you see the philosopher Hume?"

One day a lady gifted with unusual taste and sympathy, and very full of the story of "Grandison," which she had just read, said to a friend who was starting for London, "Pray call and inquire after Miss Emily and Mr. Belfort, and especially after Miss Howe, if she is still alive."

Another time, a lady I know having begun a correspondence which she thought blameless, became alarmed by the fate of Clarissa, and broke it off when she had only begun to read the book.

Have I not known two friends fall out and refuse all my efforts at reconciliation, just because the one despised the story of Clarissa which the other one raved about?

I wrote to the latter, and here are some passages from her answer: "She wearies of Clarissa's piety! What, would she have a timid young girl of eighteen, brought up by virtuous and Christian parents, who is unhappy in this world and whose only hope of happiness is in the next world, would she have this girl without religion, without faith? Her religious feelings are so sublime, so tender, and so touching; her religious ideas are so true and pure; it is her faith which adds to the pathos of her character. No, no, you will never persuade me that such a criticism springs from a noble soul.

"She laughs when she sees this child frightened by a

father's curse. She laughs and yet she is a mother herself. No, that woman can never be my friend. I blush to think she ever was. Must not an honoured father's curse, a curse which seems to have already been fulfilled in several important events, must it not be felt with terrible force by such a daughter? And who knows whether God may not ratify in eternity the sentence already pronounced by the father?

"She is surprised that I am moved to tears by this book. And I am only astonished when I read of the last hours of this innocent creature, that the very stones, and walls, and the cold and senseless flags on which I walk are not stirred to cry out and join their sorrow with mine. Then all grows dark around me; my soul is filled with gloom, and it seems to me as if nature veiled her face with crape.

"According to her opinion, Clarissa's chief gift was to make fine phrases, and when she had composed a few she was consoled. I must confess that I think it is a great curse to think and feel thus; so great, that I would rather my daughter should presently die in my arms than know that she could thus be afflicted. My daughter—yes I say it deliberately and will not draw back.

"Go on working, marvellous man, work, spare no pains, never heed if you must die in the flower of your age, when others are only beginning their work, never

heed, that so the same verdict may be passed on your masterpieces! Nature, you took hundreds of years to produce such a man as Richardson; spare nothing that you may endow him the more richly. Be a niggard to your other children, though it be only for a few minds such as mine that you bring him forth, and the tears I shed may be the only reward of his toil."

And in a postscript she adds: "I send you the funeral and the will of Clarissa which you ask me for, but I shall never forgive you if you show it to that woman. No, I retract that and say rather, read these two pieces to her yourself and be sure to let me know whether her laughter followed Clarissa to the grave so that I may hate her with a perfect hatred."

* You may see from this that there is in matters of taste as well as in religion an intolerance which I blame, but which it requires an effort of mind on my part not to share.

[7]

I had a friend with me when I received the account of the funeral and will of Clarissa, two pieces which the French translator has suppressed, though no one knows why. This friend is one of the most sensitive men I know, and an ardent admirer of Richardson, almost as great a one as I am. He carried off the volume into a corner and began to read. I watched him, and presently I see his tears begin to flow, he is obliged to stop, he sobs; suddenly he starts up and begins to walk about

without thinking where he is going; then he bursts forth into lamentations, and utters bitter reproaches against the whole Harlowe family.

I had intended to point out some of the most beautiful passages in Richardson's three poems, but how is it possible to do so? There are so many. But I remember that the 128th letter, which is from Mrs. Harvey to her niece, is a masterpiece. With much apparent ease but great truth and skill the writer takes away from *Clarissa* all hope of reconciliation with her parents, supports the plans of her seducer, gives her up to his cruel will, and decides her on going to London and listening to proposals of marriage, etc. The letter produces all kinds of results; it accuses her family while seeming to excuse it, it convinces *Clarissa* that she ought to fly, and yet it blames her for it. It is one of the many passages where I have exclaimed, "Divine Richardson!" But in order to feel this enthusiasm one must begin at the beginning and read up to this point. [?] *

I have also marked in my copy the 124th letter, which is from *Lovelace* to his accomplice *Leman*. It is a characteristic passage. One here sees the follies, the lively sallies, the wiles, the cleverness of the chief actor in the book. How he tries to win over that poor servant; he calls him "my good man, my honest fellow." How kindly he describes the reward which

awaits him ! " You will be the innkeeper at the sign of the White Bear. Your wife will be called madam ; " and then he ends his letter, " I remain your friend Lovelace." He does not care about little formalities when he has an object to gain, and he counts all as his friends who help him in his plans.

It required also a master-hand to bring together a group of villains lost to all sense of honour, and to make them the companions of Lovelace, to pique him by their mockery and harden him in his crimes. How inferior is Belfort in character, although he alone remonstrates with the villain who is his friend. How much genius it required to imagine and to balance so many varieties of character. Nor can we imagine that it was without design that the author gives his hero such a lively imagination, such a horror of marriage, such an unbridled love of intrigue, such a craving for freedom from all restraint, and such boundless vanity ; so many different qualities and vices !

Ⓢ Poets, learn from Richardson to give an accomplice to the villain of your piece, in order to lessen the horror of his crime, and, for just the opposite reason, do not give a companion to your virtuous hero, that he may stand alone in his merit.

Ⓢ With what skill Lovelace stoops to dishonour, and then raises himself. Read the 175th letter ; it is full of a cannibal's feelings, it is the cry of a wild animal ;

but four lines of a postscript change the tone and show him to us as, if not a good man, at least a man with human feelings.

"Grandison" and "Pamela" are likewise fine works, but I prefer "Clarissa," where the author shows his genius without a single flaw.

Yet "Pamela" moves as powerfully when Pamela's father, after a night's march, arrives at L——'s door and begins to inquire of the servants.

The episode of Clementina in "Grandison" is also very fine.

And at what moment do Clementina and Clarissa each become sublime? When the one has lost her honour, and the other her reason.

I cannot, without shuddering, recall the entrance of Clarissa into her mother's chamber; she is pale, her eyes are wild, her arm is bandaged, and the blood is trickling down and dropping from her fingers, and she exclaims, "Look, mother, it is your blood." This is a harrowing scene.

But why is Clementina so interesting in her madness? Because she is no longer the mistress of her thoughts, nor of her feelings, and if anything shameful were hidden in her mind or heart it must needs appear. But every word she says proves her candour and innocence, and the state of her mind prevents our doubting the truth of all she says.

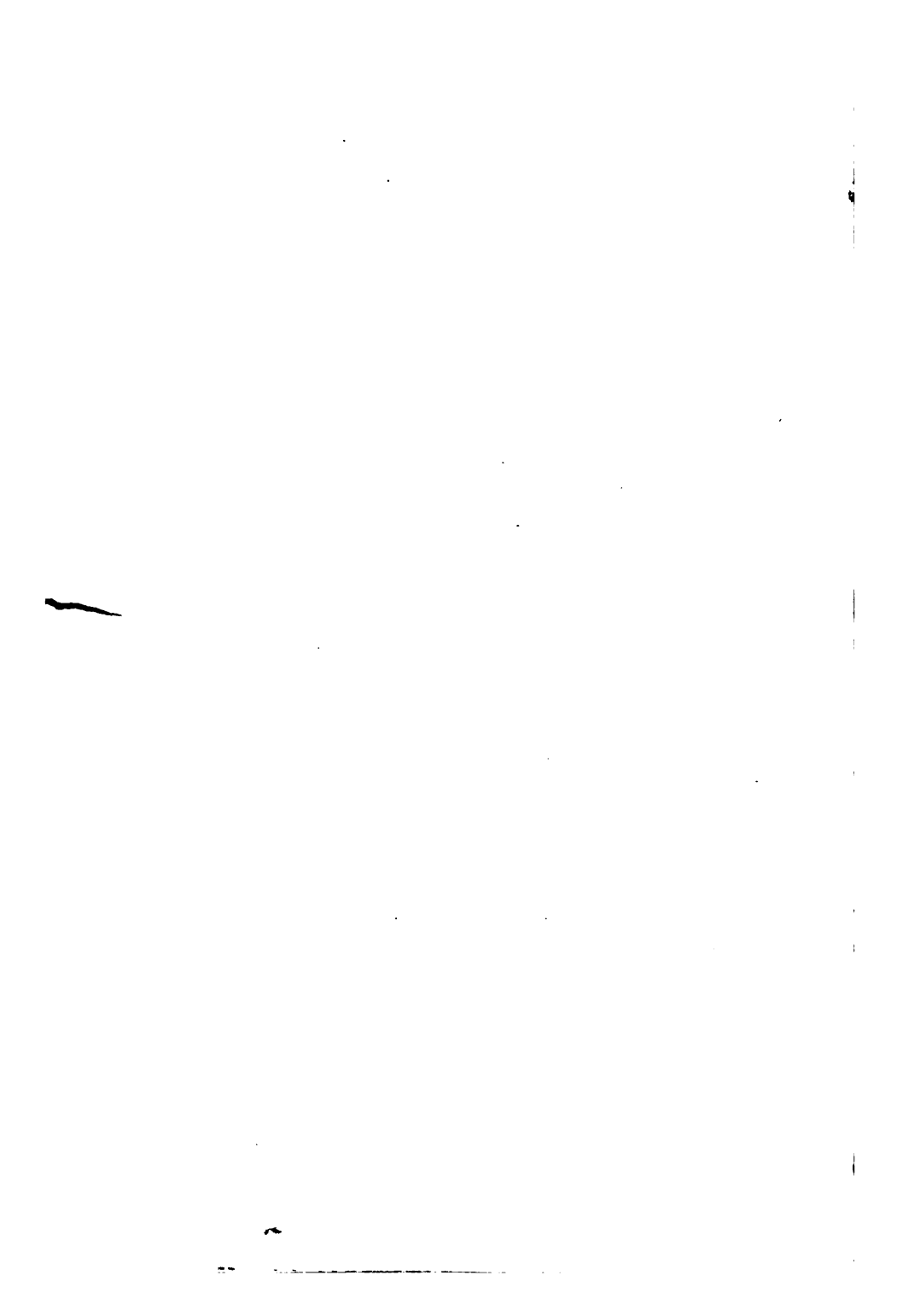
I have been told that Richardson spent some years in society, but rarely joined in conversation.

He has not gained the reputation he deserved. What a dreadful passion envy is ; it is the most cruel of the Eumenides ! She follows a man of talent to his grave, and there she disappears, and the justice of future generations takes her place.

Oh, Richardson, if you did not during your life earn all the praise that you deserved how great will be your fame among my descendants when they see you at the distance that we see Homer. Who will then dare to erase a line of your sublime work ? You have had more admirers among us than among your fellow-countrymen, and I rejoice that it is so. Centuries hasten onward and bring with you the honours that Richardson deserves. I call on my hearers to testify that I did not wait to follow the example of others in order to pay you my homage ; I have already knelt at the feet of your statue to worship you, and I have sought in vain in the depths of my heart for words which might express the admiration I feel for you. And you who read these lines which I have written down hastily and without order and without plan, just as my heart inspired me, if you can express your admiration better than I have, efface my writing. The genius of Richardson has crushed my own ; his characters people my imagination. If I wish to write I hear

Clementina lamenting, or the ghost of Clarissa appears to me. I see Grandison before me, or Lovelace disturbs me ; and then the pen slips from my fingers. And you gentler apparitions, Emily, Charlotte, Pamela, and dear Miss Howe, while I converse with you the days when I might work and gain my laurels glide away, and I approach the close of my life without having attempted anything which will bring me also some fame in years to come.

Date?



APPENDIX

SINCE publishing the first edition of this book, I came across the "Memoirs of the Princess Dashkoff;" which throw a light on the character of Diderot. This gifted woman was a great friend of Catherine II., and by her courage and energy was one of the prime movers in the revolution which unseated the miserable ruler, Peter III., and placed his wife on the throne. After her husband's death, Princess Dashkoff resolved to travel, partly from motives of economy and also for the education of her children; in 1770, she writes—

"During my stay in Paris I lived in great privacy. . . I declined making acquaintance with any one except with the celebrated Diderot. . . . One evening Diderot was sitting with me *tête-à-tête*, when a servant announced Madame Necker, and Madame Geoffrin. Diderot instantly, with his usual vivacity of manner, without giving me a moment's time to speak, ordered that they should be denied.

"'But,' said I, 'I knew Madame Necker at Spa, and the other lady is in the habit of corresponding

with the Empress of Russia, I should be very glad to make their acquaintance.'

"'Have you not assured me,' said he, 'that you have only two or three days longer to remain at Paris? Consequently, she could only see you two or three times at most, and your character would never be comprehended. No, I cannot endure that any of my idols should be blasphemed. Were you to remain a couple of months here, believe me, I should be the very first to make you acquainted with Madame Geoffrin, for she is an excellent woman; but being one of our Parisian trumpets, I absolutely will not consent to her sounding forth your character before she sufficiently knows it.'

"Entering into his whim, I desired the servant to say I was unwell. This, however, did not suffice, for the next morning I received a very complimentary note from Madame Necker, expressing her friend's great anxiety to see me, and to make the acquaintance of one of whom she had formed the highest ideal. To this I replied, that the desire I had of preserving their favourable opinion must be to me, on the present occasion, the very motive for declining the pleasure they proposed, as the situation in which I was would only risk a forfeiture of their flattering partiality.

"This circumstance obliged me to keep my room that day, and I sent my carriage for Diderot. I usually

called myself at his door, after my morning drive, which lasted from eight until three in the afternoon, and took him home with me to dinner, and very often kept him in conversation until long after midnight. On one occasion, I remember, when we were speaking of what he called the slavery of our Russian peasants, 'You will allow,' said I, 'that since I have not the soul of a slave, neither have I that of a tyrant; on this plea, therefore, I possess some little title to your confidence. On the subject of liberty, as applied to our peasants, I once thought with you; and, in consequence, I sought to diffuse happiness amongst my own people, in proportion to my power, by rendering them more free. But experience soon taught me that the only effect it produced was, throwing them on the mercy of the Crown, or rather, on that of every petty clerk who chose to exercise, under the mask of office, either the abuse of pillage or malversation. The riches and happiness of our peasants are the sole causes of our own prosperity, and the augmentation of our revenues; and as this is an established axiom, one must be mad indeed,' said I, 'to act in such a manner as to impoverish the source of our own especial interest. The nobles are the intermediate power between the Crown and the slave; and it therefore becomes our advantage to defend the latter against the rapacity of governors of provinces and overseers.'

o In his sentiment he is unlike Goethe

o || "But, princess, ~~he~~ replied, 'you cannot help granting that liberty would tend to augment their knowledge, and that from this source abundance of riches would naturally flow.'

"If the sovereign," said I, "in breaking some links of the chain which binds the peasantry to the nobles, were likewise to snap some of those which render the nobles subservient to their despotic will, I would joyfully sign a contract such as this with my blood. But in the present instance you must pardon me for saying that you appear to have confounded the effect with the cause; for it is knowledge which produces liberty, and not liberty knowledge; the former, unaccompanied by the latter, never yet failed to produce anarchy and confusion. When the lower classes of my countrymen are enlightened, they will then deserve their freedom, because they will understand how to enjoy it without using it to the detriment of their fellow-citizens, and the consequent destruction of that subordination so indispensable to every civilized community."

"You argue perfectly well, charming princess," said he; "but, nevertheless, I am not yet convinced."

"There exist," said I, "in our fundamental laws, sure antidotes against the tyranny of the nobles, although Peter the First annulled several, and even a principal one, by which the peasants had a power of

exposing their grievances against their masters. However, in the present reign, a governor of a province, after an appeal to the marshal and deputies of the nobles belonging to his Government, may punish an act of tyranny on the part of a noble against his peasants, by dispossessing the offender of the exercise of power, and transferring his lands and peasants into the guardianship of another, appointed by the nobles themselves. On this subject,' said I, 'I cannot explain myself as I should wish, though it is one which has occupied my frequent meditations, and at these moments I have presented to my imagination a man born blind, reposing on a rock in the midst of the most frightful precipices; his natural defect only renders him ignorant of the dangers of his situation, without depriving him of those powers which secure his only sense of happiness; he is therefore gay, he eats, drinks, sleeps, hearkens to the warblings of the birds, and sings responsive to the cheerfulness of his own innocent and contented mind. Suddenly an oculist appears, who, without reflecting on the impossibility of extricating him from his position, removes the film, and restores him to sight. What, then, is the consequence? A flood of light opens to his understanding only to convince him of his unhappiness; he no longer sings, or sleeps, or eats, but is absorbed in the contemplation of the precipices and engulfing waves which surround him,

and from whence it is impossible to escape. A little time brings on listlessness, and at the next glance I contemplate him, in the flower of his age, fallen a victim to despair !'

"Diderot sprung from his chair, as if by a mechanical movement, so unexpectedly was he struck with this little sketch of my feelings. He walked in rapid strides across the room ; then suddenly stopping short, and spitting on the floor in a passion, without giving himself time to draw his breath—'What a woman you are !' said he ; 'you have, in a moment, upset all the ideas I have been cherishing these twenty years !' This circumstance is truly characteristic of a being whom I admired even in these hurricanes of his enthusiastic nature.

"The sincerity and truth of his character, the brilliancy of his genius, together with the interest and esteem which he uniformly manifested for me on all occasions, attached me to him as long as he lived, and makes his memory very dear to me even at the present moment. The world has not sufficiently known this extraordinary man. Virtue and simplicity reigned in every action ; and to be accessory to the good of his fellow-creatures was his ruling passion and pursuit. If too much vivacity sometimes led him into error, he was still sincere, for he was ever his own greatest dupe ; but it remains not for me to attempt an eulogium worthy

of his many excellences, which others, better qualified, have not neglected to pronounce.

“One evening, when Diderot was sitting with me, M. de la Rhulliere was announced. He had been attached to the mission of Baron Breteuil, at Petersburg, where I had often seen him at my own house, as well as at Mademoiselle Kamensky’s.

“Hearing his name, I was in the act of desiring him to be shown upstairs, when Diderot, seizing my hand, said, with the utmost earnestness—

“‘One moment only, princess ; let me ask you, when your travels are finished, whether you have any idea of returning to Russia ?’

“‘What a question !’ said I. ‘Have I any right to expatriate my children ?’

“‘Well, then,’ said he, ‘desire that La Rhulliere may not be admitted, and I will satisfy you with my reasons afterwards.’

“‘There was something so earnest and sincere, which both his countenance and manner expressed, that I implicitly obeyed him, and without the least reluctance refused the visit of a very agreeable acquaintance, from the perfect confidence I had in the goodness of his yet unknown reasons.

“‘You are not aware,’ continued he, ‘that this man has written a memoir of the Russian revolution.’

“‘No,’ said I ; ‘but if he has, you have furnished

me with an additional motive for wishing to see him.'

"‘I can tell you, then,’ said he, ‘all that is to be known by reading its contents. You would have found yourself adorned with all the talents of our sex, added to the charms and virtues of your own. The empress, however, is treated in a very different manner, as well as the King of Poland, with whom her affair, when grand duchess, is fully exposed; and, in consequence, her majesty, through the means of Betskoy and your *chargé d’affaires*, Prince Galitzin, set on foot a negotiation to buy up the work, which was so awkwardly conducted that three copies were taken and deposited by La Rhuliere, one in the cabinet of foreign affairs, a second in the hands of Madame Grammont, and a third with the Archbishop of Paris. After this failure, I was honoured by a commission from her majesty to make some terms with La Rhuliere himself; but all I could obtain from him was a promise not to publish it, either during his lifetime or that of the empress. You perceive, therefore, that in receiving the visit of La Rhuliere you would have given a sanction to his book, which is a source of infinite uneasiness to her majesty, and which having been read at Madame Geoffrin’s, whose house assembles all persons of any note here, and all strangers of distinction, is thus made known enough already, notwithstanding this good lady’s friendship for

Poniatowsky, whom, whilst at Paris, she loaded with the most extravagant professions of kindness, and whom she afterwards, in all her letters, addressed as her very dear son.'

"'But how can one reconcile this to one's self?' replied I.

"'Oh! as for that,' said he, 'we give ourselves very little trouble in France; we think and act without any reference to consistency, and neither sixty nor eighty years of experience ever make the slightest difference in the heedlessness of our unreflecting natures.'

"De la Rhulliere called twice afterwards at my door, but was not admitted. I was sensibly touched at this proof of Diderot's friendship, the good effect of which I experienced on my return to Petersburg fifteen months afterwards, when I learned from a person very much in Count Theodore Orloff's confidence, to whom some years before I had the good fortune of rendering a service, that Diderot, soon after my departure from Paris, had written to the empress, and, after speaking in the warmest terms of my attachment to her, he declared that since I had absolutely refused to see La Rhulliere, the authenticity of his book had been more called in question than by anything which ten Voltaires, or fifty wretched Diderots, could ever have said or written. He had not even hinted to me his intention of writing this circumstance to the empress,

which his foresight alone had occasioned, and his friendship had thus rendered meritorious, as my own action; a delicacy of conduct which, as long as I live, I shall never cease to reflect on with admiration and gratitude."

THE END

